

Hafa Adai!

Audit cites significant PSS financial understatements. **PAGE 3**
USCG medevacs man from Alamagan to Saipan. **PAGE 4**

\$1

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WHO: COVID-19 pandemic is no longer an emergency

By MARIA CHENG and JAMEY KEATEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA (AP)—The World Health Organization said Friday that COVID-19 no longer qualifies as a global emergency, marking a symbolic end to the devastating coronavirus pandemic that triggered once-unthinkable lockdowns, upended economies and killed millions of people worldwide.

» After three years, WHO downgrades COVID-19 pandemic

See WHO on Page 4

CUC, CHCC reach settlement

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Palacios



Muña



Tenorio

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios disclosed \$25,000 per month starting this late yesterday afternoon that

they were able to get the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to come to a settlement agreement in order to avoid disconnecting power and water services to the hospital.

Under the settlement accord, CHCC agreed to pay CUC

See CUC on Page 4

Junseo Kim wins the 2023 NMI Congressional Art Competition

Junseo Kim of Saipan International School has been named the winner of the 2023 Northern Marianas Congressional Art Competition, ac-

See JUNSEO on Page 4

Photo shows Junseo Kim's winning artwork, "Bird of the Sea."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Days until
'touchback rule'
takes effect on
Sept. 30, 2023:

144

Senate committee is created to look into \$93M CDL funds

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Having gotten no objection from the Office of the Public Auditor, Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has created a special committee



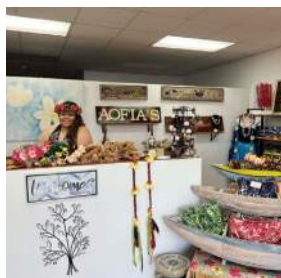
DeLeon Guerrero

to investigate the previous Torres administration's expenditures of the \$93-million Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Disaster Loan funds.

DeLeon Guerrero

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INSIDE



BUSINESS

Aofia's Culture Shop tries to keep Pacific island culture alive with their island-themed items.

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ASIA

Japan's PM express sympathy for the suffering of Korean forced laborers during Japan's rule.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

"Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3," which says goodbye to this franchise, earns \$114 million.

PAGE 15



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Local

Palacios urges Indian investors to consider the NMI as part of their investment strategy

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, India's investors should

consider the CNMI as part of their investment and growth strategy.

That was the message of Gov. Arnold I. Palacios in his speech at the India

Embassy in Washington, D.C., last Wednesday, during which Palacios talked about investment opportunities in the CNMI and its proximity to Asia.

Palacios, who was in Washington D.C. for the four-day 2023 SelectUSA Investment Summit, hopes that Indian companies consider the CNMI as part of their investment strategies, whether that includes ex-

panding globally, or tapping other markets and leveraging the Commonwealth as an element in the global supply management system.

As part of his sales pitch, Palacios mentioned several business incentives that have attracted foreign direct investment in the CNMI, including tax structures that are favorable to businesses such

as zero property tax, zero sales tax, lower excise or import taxes compared to other territories, and having a qualifying certificate program.

Palacios also noted the CNMI's exemption from the Jones Act, having access to foreign workforce, exemption from the H visa cap, and having the CNMI-Only Transitional Work Program.

Pistang Pinoy to mark PH Independence Day

In the celebration of the 125th Philippine Independence Day, the United Filipino Organization will hold Pistang Pinoy on June 18, 2023, Sunday, at the Marianas Business Plaza from 11am to 6pm.

The whole-day event will feature games, entertainment, food, raffle drawings,

and a contest for Father & Son lookalike, in celebration of Father's Day.

If you wish to join the festivity, contact the following committees.

■ For vendors, contact Saipan Building and Fixing Computer Users Group president Edmin Elayda at (670) 989-0375.

■ For entertainers, contact Bayani Association president Annamae Adaza at (670) 285-4388.

■ For sponsorship and Father & Son lookalike contest, contact UFO president Birhen Martinez at (670) 483-0915 or UFO secretary Yho Villavicencio at (670) 285-9017. **(PR)**

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EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH JAPAN

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and House of Representatives Speaker Edmund Villagomez pose with Japan's ambassador to the United States, Koji Tomita, during a get-together at the ambassador's residence in an event intended to connect Japanese investors with investment opportunities in the United States.

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Mother's Day Brunch, Sunday 14th May 11am-2pm

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Audit cites significant PSS financial understatements

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An independent audit conducted on the CNMI Public School System financials have identified significant understatement of cash, capital assets, liabilities and expenses. The audit, which was conducted by accounting firm Ernst & Young (CNMI), Inc., stated that there appears to have been a combination of “lack of reconciliations, improper performance of cut-off procedures, ineffective communication among PSS finance team and other departments, and insufficient supervision and review relating to significant classes of transactions.” Because of these, “material errors over the financial statement close process may exist and not be identified and

corrected in a timely manner, resulting in the preparation of materially misstated financial statements.” The audit covered the year ending Sept. 30, 2021, and the report was completed on April 26, 2023. The Office of the Public Auditor received the audit report last Thursday. The audit is an 82-page report that contains reports of independent auditors, management’s discussion and analysis, audited financial statements, required supplementary information, reports on internal control and compliance, schedule of findings and questioned costs, corrective action plan, and the summary schedule of prior year audit findings. The auditors recommend improving controls to ensure all transactions, including non-cash transactions, are recorded in the proper accounting period. PSS agreed with the findings. Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said the Finance Department’s lack of adequate staffing and management personnel “contributed to the findings. Finance director and comptroller position was filled and have implemented [a] financial statement close process including cutoff procedures, account reconciliations and in-depth review of transactions related to payroll, purchases and federal award income and cash receipts.” PSS said the remaining findings/recommendations will be addressed by Sept. 30, 2023, which is the end of the current fiscal year. In the area of General Ledger and Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, the audit found that PSS did

not have effective controls over the preparation of the SEFA—a financial statement schedule prepared by management that lists an organization’s expenditures of federal assistance for the fiscal year by federal agency, grant number, and amount. According to the audit, PSS’ SEFA did not include a \$1.2-million loan from the U.S Department of Agriculture for which proceeds were used to pay-off a commercial bank loan. Therefore, the audit suggests “PSS should improve controls to help ensure the SEFA is prepared accurately and completely. Any cutoff procedures performed for the financial statements must also cover the SEFA.” PSS also agreed with the finding. According to Ada, the Federal Programs Office

has hired a director of Internal Control & Evaluation and deputy budget officer to oversee and ensure that SEFA is prepared accurately and completely while working closely with federal programs officer and financial budget analyst. “Future preparations of the SEFA will follow the accrual basis, so activities and receipt

of goods that occurred during the fiscal year will be reflected in both SEFA and in the books. The Federal Programs Office process of recording grant revenues, reporting and SOPs will be revisited,” he said. PSS earlier said it will issue a statement about the audit results, but has not issued one yet as of press time.



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/LABORATORY-013

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 5th, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

“LABORATORY EXPANSION PROJECT #2”
(Coordinate, Design, Oversight Monitoring and Construction)
for CHC Hospital / Laboratory Department

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH], ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY



COMMONWEALTH JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
Guma' Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 • Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 • Facsimile: (670) 236-9702
Website: www.NMIjudiciary.com

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

PROBATION OFFICER I
Re-Announcement # JVA23-011
SAIPAN

DUTIES: This position works under the direct supervision of the Chief Probation Officer or his/her designee in the Office of Adult Probation on Saipan, and may be detailed to Rota or Tinian. The incumbent makes a positive difference in the lives of criminal and traffic probationers, providing them with the accountability, skills, and resources to avoid further brushes with the law. He or she provides investigation, monitoring and/or supervising various levels and types of probationers' court ordered probation; and ensure compliance with the court's conditions of the probationers' supervised release and community control, working in close coordination with the justice system. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Performs all assigned duties relating to court-probation cases under probation administration and operation assignment;
- Interacts with the court and law enforcement officials, healthcare providers, the probationer's employers and/or relation, and other pertinent agencies;
- Appears, reports and articulates the probationer's status at scheduled court hearings;
- Investigates and assesses the probationer's personal history and background upon court's order;
- Gathers and evaluates data pertinent to the probationer's case from resource areas such as the probationer's home, school, church, social agencies, neighborhood contacts, and etc.;
- Recommends treatment and rehabilitation plans;
- Monitors the probationers placed on probation; and provides updates to the court on their probationary status;
- Interviews probationers according to approved techniques in order to determine and clarify probationers' problems, and consults with the supervisor as necessary to suggest constructive methods for dealing with such problems;
- Assists Probation-Crime Victims with their impact statement, victims' rights, restitution, and other needed services;
- Contacts public and private community agencies to secure their aid in solving probationers' problems and maintains a continuing and ongoing relationships with the agencies as necessary;
- Documents facts and testifies in court with respect to the probationer's activities, behavior, and quality of adjustment while under supervision;
- Reports investigative findings to the court and prepares recommendations for the proper case disposition;
- Assists in the conduct of procedure in the courtroom during court sessions;
- Periodically interviews probationers to determine effectiveness of probation mandates, supervision, counseling, etc.;
- Refers probationers to Community Agencies for assistance in rehabilitation;
- Provides periodic contact with collateral sources for information to evaluate or verify probationers' current adjustment;
- Enforces court orders involving probation cases;
- Recommends revocation and/or modification of probation when necessary;
- Possess skills necessary for the use of and care of firearms, and performs and enforces the CNMI Weapons Control Act and Federal Firearms Regulations. Applicant is required to pass either a CNMI Law Enforcement or Federal Firearms Certification course and meet the criteria for annual firearms qualification to carry firearms under the Marshals Service Division Firearms Standard Operating Procedures;
- Follows court policies for monitoring payments ordered by the court. The payments to be monitored include, but are not limited to, restitution, fine, child supports, and etc.;
- Plans office activities, conferences, and field visits in connection with investigation and supervision functions;
- Maintains accurate, neat, legible and up-to-date case records in the prescribed form;
- Attends public relations activities such as community group meetings, conference, panel discussions, and other related forums; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: The candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent and satisfy one of the following:

- (1) Associates degree or a Bachelors degree from a nationally accredited college in related field, plus at least six months experience as a law enforcement officer; or
- (2) any suitable combination of work experience and training of at least six years.

Successful candidates must complete and pass law enforcement training, including firearms qualification, during the probationary period. Military experience may be considered; successful candidates with only military background must complete additional law enforcement training during the probationary period.

Must have the ability to maintain and control sensitive and confidential information, maintain records professionally, and uphold office policies. Must be proficient with the use of general office software including but not limited to Microsoft Word and Excel.

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules IV of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.¹

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is position serves under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge. The salary range will be \$24,000 - \$26,400 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS: Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Officer at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices in Tinian at Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

NMI Judiciary
Human Resources
Guma' Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 236-9818 • Cell. (670) 783-8592 • Fax. (670) 236-9702
hr.judiciary@NMIjudiciary.gov

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at <http://www.nmijudiciary.gov>

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

¹ The following organizations evaluate foreign educational credentials for employment and other purposes. All operate on a fee based on the extent of the education to be evaluated; applicants shall bear the cost of evaluation.
(a) Credentials Evaluation Service P.O. Box 24679 Los Angeles, CA 90024
(b) Education Equivalency Evaluation World Education Services P.O. Box 745 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10011
(c) Education Credential Evaluators, Inc. P.O. Box 17499 Milwaukee, WI 53217
(d) International Consultants of Delaware, Inc. 914 Pickett Lane Newark, DE 19711
(e) Foundation for International Services, Inc. P.O. Box 230278 Portland, OR 97223.
While the Judiciary offer these addresses as information to applicants who request assistance in obtaining an evaluation of foreign education, these services are not preferred over others which may exist.



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Website: www.NMIjudiciary.com

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

CASEWORKER I
for Mental Health Court
Announcement # JVA23-017
SAIPAN

DUTIES: The Mental Health Caseworker I position will work under general supervision of the Presiding Judge and will work under the direct supervision of the designated Mental Health Court Judge and the Mental Health Court Manager. The Caseworker is responsible for Mental Health Court Docket assessments, case management with Mental Health Court participants and provides ongoing support to the Mental Health Court operation/functions. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Conducts all case management services on assigned clients, including but not limited to, intake, assessment, establish case plan for referred participants;
- Conducts program/phase orientation and inform participants of requirements and implications concerning treatment;
- Collects, analyzes, evaluates and reports information obtained during the course of the case management services and reports the information to the court and the treatment providers;
- Supervises and evaluates the behavior of the participants to ensure compliance with terms and conditions of Mental Health Court Docket;
- Maintains case records as required by the courts, treatment providers and mental health court case management office;
- Prepares and participates in status hearings on a weekly basis;
- Tracks drug tests, group attendance, individual counseling attendance, outside groups (Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Discovery Course) and other services;
- Coordinates individual, family and group therapeutic/educational/substance abuse treatment sessions/ mental health treatment sessions and crisis intervention;
- Conducts discharge planning and provides referrals for continuing treatment;
- Provides follow-up contact as needed;
- Communicates with Community Supervision Worker and other Mental Health Court staff to secure resources for participants;
- Maintains files, records, legal and case documentation in accordance with established regulatory policies and procedure;
- Attends staff meetings, in-service training, workshops, and interagency conferences to coordinate services;
- Attends Mental Health Court sessions;
- Make recommendations for appropriate modifications of imposed sanctions;
- Assists clients to secure employment, medical, legal, residential and social services, as needed;
- Participates in and contributes to ongoing training programs and applies new evidence-based techniques;
- Collaborates with community agencies and activities as needed;
- Reports all hazardous incidents encountered to the Mental Health Court Docket Team;
- Attends client staffings; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: The Mental Health Caseworker I must have a high school diploma or equivalent and have obtained a bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, or closely related field. Preference given to individuals with three (3) years' experiences as a counselor in mental health treatment programs. Any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the minimum knowledge, abilities and skills required for the position. Candidate must be able to work in a fast-paced environment and work under pressure. Candidate must also have the:

- ability to express ideas clearly and concisely, orally and in writing to groups and individuals;
- ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees and the general public;
- ability to deal firmly and tactfully and impartially with people contacted in the course of the work; and
- ability to make reasonable and objective decisions and recommendations.

Must have the ability to maintain and control sensitive and confidential information, maintain records professionally, and uphold office policies. Must be proficient with the use of general office software including but not limited to Microsoft Word and Excel.

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules IV of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is an ungraded position appointed and serves at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge. The salary range will be \$35,000 - \$40,000 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS PERSONS Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

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Tel. (670) 236-9818 • Cell. (670) 783-8592 • Fax. (670) 236-9702
hr.judiciary@NMIjudiciary.com

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at <http://www.nmijudiciary.com>

The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

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(b) Education Equivalency Evaluation World Education Services P.O. Box 745 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10011
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(d) International Consultants of Delaware, Inc. 914 Pickett Lane Newark, DE 19711
(e) Foundation for International Services, Inc. P.O. Box 230278 Portland, OR 97223.
While the Judiciary offer these addresses as information to applicants who request assistance in obtaining an evaluation of foreign education, these services are not preferred over others which may exist.

USCG medevacs man from Alamagan to Saipan

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew, with assistance from the CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, medically evacuated a 30-year-old man with head and neck injuries from Alamagan Island to Saipan arriving on Monday, May 8, 2023.

"I am immensely proud of the medical evacuation conducted by the crew of the USCGC *Oliver Henry*, in partnership with DFEMS, in the Northern Mariana Islands. This suc-

cessful mission is a shining example of the power of partnerships between government agencies and our ability to work together to achieve a common goal. At the heart of our mission is a commitment to saving lives, and this recent operation demonstrates our unwavering dedication to that cause."

The crew safely embarked the man and delivered him to a waiting emergency medical personnel on Saipan in stable condition. Alamagan is 140 nautical miles north of Saipan.

"It was all-hands-on-deck throughout the night to safely transport the injured member to Saipan during the 14-hour journey from Saipan to Alamagan and back," said Lt. Freddy Hofschneider, commanding officer of USCGC *Oliver Henry*. "I want to give a special shout-out to BM2 Lewis for incredible boat driving and CS1 Pablo for providing top-notch medical care."

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam Joint Rescue Sub-Center watchstanders received

a request from the Saipan Emergency Operations Center team Sunday afternoon to medically evacuate a man reportedly suffering from severe headaches and swelling related

to a speargun accident.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

WHO

From Page 1

The announcement, made more than three years after WHO declared the coronavirus an international crisis, offers some relief, if not an ending, to a pandemic that stirred fear and suspicion, hand-wringing and finger-pointing across the globe.

The U.N. health agency's officials said that even though the emergency phase was over, the pandemic hasn't finished, noting recent spikes in cases in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

WHO says thousands of people are still dying from the virus every week, and millions of others are suffering from debilitating, long-term effects.

"It's with great hope that I declare COVID-19 over as a global health emergency," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"That does not mean COVID-19 is over as a global health threat," he said, warning that new variants could yet emerge. Tedros noted that while the official COVID-19 death toll was 7 million, the real figure was estimated to be at least 20 million.

Tedros said the pandemic had been on a downward trend for more than a year, acknowledging that most coun-

tries have already returned to life before COVID-19.

He bemoaned the damage that COVID-19 had done to the global community, saying the pandemic had shattered businesses, exacerbated political divisions, led to the spread of misinformation and plunged millions into poverty.

The political fallout in some countries was swift and unforgiving. Some pundits say missteps by President Donald Trump in his administration's response to the pandemic had a role in his losing reelection bid in 2020. The United States saw the deadliest outbreak anywhere in the world — where more than 1 million people died across the country.

Dr. Michael Ryan, WHO's emergencies chief, said it was incumbent on heads of states and other leaders to negotiate a wide-ranging pandemic treaty to decide how future health threats should be faced.

Ryan said that some of the scenes witnessed during COVID-19, when people resorted to "bartering for oxygen canisters," fought to get into emergency rooms and died in parking lots because they couldn't get treated, must never be repeated.

When the U.N. health agency first declared the coronavirus to be an international crisis on Jan. 30, 2020, it

hadn't yet been named COVID-19 and there were no major outbreaks beyond China.

More than three years later, the virus has caused an estimated 764 million cases globally and about 5 billion people have received at least one dose of vaccine.

In the U.S., the public health emergency declaration made regarding COVID-19 is set to expire on May 11, when wide-ranging measures to support the pandemic response, including vaccine mandates, will end. Many other countries, including Germany, France and Britain, dropped most of their provisions against the pandemic last year.

When Tedros declared COVID-19 to be an emergency in 2020, he said his greatest fear was the virus' potential to spread in countries with weak health systems.

In fact, some of the countries that suffered the worst COVID-19 death tolls were previously judged to be the best-prepared for a pandemic, including the U.S. and Britain. According to WHO data, the number of deaths reported in Africa account for just 3% of the global total.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

SENATE

From Page 1

said yesterday this is not the first time she has raised questions related to FEMA's CDL funds, since she raised the same questions as a member of the previous Legislature's minority bloc.

"We are now five months into the 23rd Legislature and we continue to hear the depletion and/or over commitment of funds to include these FEMA CDL funds that is forgiven in its entirety," she said.

At the same time, DeLeon Guerrero said, she sent a letter dated Feb. 3, 2023 to OPA, requesting for an audit of the CDL funds. In that letter, DeLeon Guerrero asked OPA to conduct an audit to determine what fund the \$93-million CDL loan was recorded and accounted for; total expenditures; total encumbrances; total reimbursements; and identify what activities or programs would have reimbursed the CDL fund; and balance of the CDL as of Jan. 31, 2023.

DeLeon Guerrero said yesterday that acting Public Auditor Dora Guerrero paid a courtesy visit to her office last Friday on a separate matter, so she took the liberty to bring

to her attention her intent to create a special committee to look into the CDL funds. The senator said that, inasmuch as OPA is busy with other matters, Guerrero did not object to her plan.

In a memorandum on Friday, DeLeon Guerrero appointed Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) to serve as chairman of the special committee, which will be tasked with reviewing and reporting on all financial transactional expenditures/activities of the FEMA CDL Funds.

The Senate president said this in-depth review since the CNMI's receipt of the \$93-million CDL is necessary so that they can understand and validate the corresponding financial transactions in relation to these funds, to include the need for public transparency and accountability of the funds.

DeLeon Guerrero said OPA did receive her request dated Feb. 3, 2023, to audit the CDL funds, but in the interest of time, the need for this review is pressing.

She also cited as additional reason the dire financial situation of the CNMI, and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' veto of Section 705(c) of Public Law 23-04, or the Revised Appropriations and Budget Authority Law of

2023. Under that section 705(c), the Finance secretary is supposed to reserve \$7.2 million from the CDL to fund the local Medicaid matching.

In vetoing that provision, Palacios said not only would that provision violate the Code of Federal Regulations, but the previous Torres administration has exhausted all CDL funding and there is no balance in the account to allocate for any use.

DeLeon Guerrero also appointed Sens. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) and Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) as vice chair and member, respectively, of the special committee. She appointed fiscal analyst David Demapan, the Senate legal counsel, and a Senate legislative assistant to assist the special committee in its review.

DeLeon Guerrero said the special committee shall report back to her within 60 days.

FEMA approved the CDL in 2021 in order to settle the CNMI's outstanding obligations associated with its response to Super Typhoon Yutu's devastation in the Commonwealth in October 2018.

The CNMI received the CDL in 2021 and then-governor Ralph DLG Torres was the expenditure authority of the funds at the time.

Power service interruption in Dandan

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Thursday, May 11, 2023, in Dandan, from 9am to 11am.

■ Area(s) affected: Dandan; Agi Street, Kanastra Ave., Inestila Street, Olofa Pl., and Wos Pl.

■ Purpose: For the line crew to straighten a leaning concrete pole.

■ Water well(s) affected: None

■ Wastewater facility affected: None

■ Traffic light(s): None

For more information, contact the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

JUNSEO

From Page 1

cording to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) yesterday.

A statement from the delegate's office said that a group of local artist-judges chose Kim's work from among 17 entries submitted by Northern Marianas high school students for the annual competition.

"Congratulations to Mr. Kim for winning this year's Congressional Art Competition," said Sablan. "I look forward to seeing Junseo's work displayed at the Capitol, alongside other winning artwork from talented young artists across the nation. ...Judges must have had a difficult time evaluating the artwork submitted by our young artists. The skill and attention to detail, like every year, was very impressive. I commend all the students who submitted their art for this year's competition, and I thank our artist-judges who volunteered their time to review and evaluate the entries."

Kim is a sophomore at Saipan International School. His entry in the competition was submitted by SIS art teacher Amie McRoberts.

Kim's work, titled *Bird of the Sea*, depicts a sea turtle swimming in the ocean. Kim describes his piece as a "turtle is living in the CNMI's ocean. I believe that the turtle is the ocean's bird because a bird flaps its wings in the air. Similarly, a turtle uses its fins in the ocean. When I go diving and see these majestic creatures, to me it represents freedom and endless opportunity."

Kim's watercolor and colored pencil piece will be displayed for one year at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and he will receive an invitation to attend this year's Congressional Art Competition National Reception.

Each year in the spring, Members of Congress host the Congressional Art Competition for high school students in their districts. Students can submit artwork using a variety of media, such as oil, charcoal, watercolors, pencils, photographs, collages, prints, or computer-generated art for the chance to have their work displayed on the U.S. Capitol. This is the 15th year that students from the Northern Mariana Islands have been able to participate in the Congressional Art Competition. (PR)

CUC

From Page 1

Friday and the terms are for one year, according to CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña yesterday in response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry.

"I believe the agreement is fair and sustainable for CHCC," she said.

Palacios said he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang sat down the whole afternoon with both CUC and CHCC in the governor's conference room and that he is glad that both agencies signed the settlement agreement to resolve CHCC's arrears for unpaid power, water, and wastewater billings.

With the agreement, CHCC or the hospital will no longer be under threat of disconnection of power and water services, Palacios said.

"We calmed the situation down and really worked for two hours to come up with a solution that is agreeable to both parties," he said.

Aside from Palacios, Apatang, and their legal counsel, others present at the negotiations were Muña, CUC board chair Janice A. Tenorio, acting CUC executive director Betty G. Terlaje, CUC director Rufo Mafnas, Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita, Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan), and Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), among others.

Palacios told the media yesterday morning that the ideal plan is not to disconnect CHCC, but to have a payment plan going forward.

"So I'm just [going to] ask that everybody stay calm and look at the necessities for this community, but also to accept the fact that we owe our utilities and we must come up with a payment plan for that," he said.

To ignore the \$53 million owed CUC—or \$25 million plus penalty—is unacceptable and it's a dereliction of duty, he said.

"We need to be...accountable and responsible. ...The hospital is a critical service to our people, [but] we also have to come [up] with an acceptable plan," Palacios said.

CUC's plan to disconnect power and water services to CHCC and Department of Public Works last Thursday for failing to pay \$53.6 million and \$1.12 million in utility billings and late charges, respectively, did not push through. CUC announced Thursday night that it held off the scheduled disconnection following a breakthrough in negotiations.

CHCC's previous proposal to pay \$225,000 monthly was rejected by the CUC board of directors. CUC's previous proposal was for a monthly payment of \$500,000 plus \$225,000—for a total of \$725,000 each month.

Guam Guard enlists its 1st GED+ Program graduate

BARRIGADA, Guam—Cinto Peredo of Dededo, Guam, enlisted into the Guam Army National Guard as the first candidate to complete the Graduate Equivalency Degree program at the Guam Community College.

The GED+ Program is a joint venture between the Guam Army National Guard and the Guam Community College that enables students to attain a GED, pass the military entrance exam, and enlist in the Guard.

Peredo, who is a father of three, currently works as a mechanic and tire technician. "I heard about the Guard and wanted to better my lifestyle and create more opportunities for my family," said Peredo. But without a GED, he was unable to enlist.

He signed up for the first 31-day GED+ Program in November 2022 and took courses in Math, Science, English, and Social Studies. He received additional tutoring in

math from David Conlu of the Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion. With the additional support, Peredo passed his GED+ exam in April 2023.

Brig Gen. Mike Cruz, adjutant general, gave remarks prior to enlisting Peredo. "When you said you're trying to get better, Cinto, it's important for two reasons. One, it's the Army's slogan to 'Be All You Can Be.' Second, living here in the second island chain, you are becoming a defender of your homeland. I'd like to welcome you to the team, and I'm inspired by what you've overcome to be here. Thanks also to your family, because it takes your support for him to do what he did," said Cruz.

Dr. Mary Okada, president and CEO of Guam Community College was also in attendance. "This program is a model of how we can come together to lift people up," said Okada. "The GED+ program is such a significant milestone



Cinto Peredo of Dededo, Guam, left, is sworn into the Guam Army National Guard by Brig. Gen. Mike Cruz, adjutant general, at the Barrigada Readiness Complex May 2, 2023.

U.S. NATIONAL GUARD/MARK SCOTT

not only for your service, but as a way to encourage others and tell them if I can do this, you can do this. This is the first of more to come, and thank you to everyone involved from the GCC and the Guard in helping lift these individuals up."

Peredo will become a 91B, Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic, in the Guam Army National Guard. *(Guam National Guard Public Affairs)*

DPS chief tackles morale issue

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a bid to fix the low morale issues that have long been a problem at the Department of Public Safety, Commissioner Clement Bermudes has implemented a new shift schedule that now allows DPS personnel to have more times with their families.

From three shift of 12 hours (minimum) each, DPS has now implemented four shifts, with each officer working eight hours (unless overtime is needed).

Bermudes said in an interview with local media outlets that one of the key factors contributing to low morale within the department was the unpredictable shift schedules that resulted in officers losing time with their families.

"Officers wanted time back. They want time to be with their families and to be with their community," he said. "One way to address this issue was by establishing four different shifts. With this new schedule, all officers are given two full days off. Prior to the implementation of a new shift schedule, most officers were working three shifts at 12 hours minimum. Now, with four shifts, officers will only be working eight hours unless justified overtime is authorized."

According to the transition report for DPS that was submitted last Jan. 3, it stated that the general disposition of DPS officers has been

characterized by low morale, based on interviews conducted with DPS personnel.

Bermudes said that low morale is an indicator of burn out in police officers and he is trying his best to ensure that officers are given some time to step back from the department and their roles as officers.

"These people are humans too and low morale is one of those indicators that an individual is burnt out. We need to give our officers the time



Bermudes

they need to reset, be individuals, be fathers, be mothers, be wives, be husbands, etc. That is what they value, and that is what I value. So now, I want to be very careful in how we work our officers because they are not machines. Again, they are human beings that also need to take a knee, seek help, etc. It's a tough job. They've also been through a number of crises and some of them need to be given the opportunity to seek help," he said.

In addition, Bermudes said he is also working on reassignments to put officers in units where they are most suited for.

"We are clearly and consciously reassigning people to units where they are qualified, or where they can be trained to qualify to serve in those capacities. The reassignments are not done on a whim, or by virtue of feeling, or by any animosity against any group or individuals. It is fair across and it is transparent," Bermudes said.

LEGAL NOTICE

IF YOU, A CHILD IN YOUR CARE, OR ANOTHER LOVED ONE WERE HARMED BY ENDO OR A RELATED COMPANY, INCLUDING PAR OR AMS, OR THEIR PRODUCTS INCLUDING OPIOIDS, RANITIDINE, OR TRANSVAGINAL MESH, YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED BY DEADLINES IN THE ENDO BANKRUPTCY.

The deadline to file a claim in the bankruptcy is July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).

The deadline to object to Endo's sale is July 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

On August 16, 2022, Endo International plc and certain of its affiliates filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. Certain Endo affiliates manufactured and/or sold, among other things, branded opioid medications (including but not limited to OPANA® (oxymorphone hydrochloride), OPANA® ER (oxymorphone hydrochloride extended release), and PERCOCET® (oxycodone and acetaminophen tablets)), generic opioid medications, generic ranitidine medications, and transvaginal mesh. **This notice is intended to inform you of your rights in this bankruptcy regarding the bar date and proof of claim process and Endo's proposed sale of substantially all of its assets.**

WHAT IS A CLAIM?

A "claim" means a right to seek payment or other compensation. If you, a child in your care, or another loved one were harmed by Endo or a related company, including Par or American Medical Systems (AMS), or their products, including opioids, ranitidine, or transvaginal mesh, you may have a claim against one or more of these entities. To make a claim, you will need to submit a proof of claim in the bankruptcy case. You may file a claim on behalf of yourself, a child in your care (including a child exposed to opioids in the womb), or a deceased or disabled relative. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Endo bankruptcy include but are not limited to:

- > **Opioid Claims:** Claims for death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of consortium, or neonatal abstinence syndrome (sometimes referred to as "NAS"), among others.
- > **Ranitidine claims:** Claims for cancer, including bladder, esophageal, pancreatic, stomach, and liver cancer, among others.
- > **Transvaginal mesh claims:** Claims for pelvic pain, infection, bleeding, among others.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BAR DATE AND PROOF OF CLAIM PROCESS?

The deadline to submit your proof of claim is called a bar date. The bar date, or the deadline to submit your proof of claim, is July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time). If you do not submit a proof of claim by the deadline, you will lose any rights you may have had to seek payment or compensation. You must file a proof of claim form so that it is actually received by the bar date. A proof of claim form can be filed by you, a legal guardian, survivors, or relatives of people who have died or are disabled. You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you.

For a more complete list of relevant companies and products manufactured and/or sold by Endo and its related companies, including full prescribing information and BOXED WARNINGS for OPANA® (oxymorphone hydrochloride), OPANA® ER (oxymorphone hydrochloride extended release), and PERCOCET® (oxycodone and acetaminophen tablets), and for more complete details about the bar date and instructions on how to file a confidential personal injury claim, visit EndoClaims.com or call 877.542.1878 (Toll-Free) or 929.284.1688 (International).

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SALE?

Endo intends to sell substantially all of its assets in an auction and sale process in the bankruptcy case and subject to approval by the bankruptcy court. **Endo is seeking relief that the sale will be free and clear of all claims, liens, and encumbrances.**

If you disagree with the proposed sale, you must object to the sale in writing, so that your objection is received on or before **July 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).** **Any party in interest who fails to properly file and serve its objection by the objection deadline may lose its claim against Endo's assets if the sale is approved.** Objections not filed and served properly may not be considered by the bankruptcy court.

Complete details about the proposed sale, including any auction for Endo's assets, the date of the hearing to consider the sale, and instructions on how to file an objection, are available at EndoClaims.com or by calling 877.542.1878 (Toll-Free) or 929.284.1688 (International).

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

CALL: 877.542.1878 (Toll-Free)
929.284.1688 (International)

VISIT: EndoClaims.com

EMAIL: EndoInquiries@ra.kroll.com

WRITE: Endo International plc Claims Processing Center
c/o Kroll Restructuring Administration LLC
Grand Central Station, PO Box 4850
New York, NY 10163-4850

SSHS Manta Ray Battalion hands over command

Saipan Southern High School's
Manta Ray Battalion.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Saipan Southern High School's Manta Ray Battalion conducted their annual change of command and promotion ceremony for the incoming battalion commander last May 5, 2023, in front of the school's Manta Ray Monument.

The ceremony marked the

official occasion when outgoing battalion commander C/LTC Julius Torres relinquished his position to the incoming battalion commander, C/LTC Mechaella De Ramos.

The Manta Ray Battalion was in a battalion formation from 9am to 11am and started

with the battalion color guard presenting the colors while the national and CNMI anthems were sung by C/2LT Logan Mendiola and Johanna Mogar.

De Ramos received the colors after passing through outgoing C/CSM Anthony Villagomez, Torres, and the SSHS principal

Vince Dela Cruz.

Torres was given a plaque as a recognition for his dedication, commitment, and strong leadership skills while he commanded the Manta Ray Battalion during the school year 2022-2023. De Ramos takes over for the school year 2023-2024.

Both outgoing and incoming battalion commanders celebrated the occasion by cutting a cake shared with the other cadets.

The Manta Ray Battalion's senior army instructor is CSM (ret.) Richard Basa and its Army instructor is SFC (ret.) Deynarose Sunderland.

The change of command

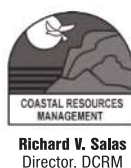
ceremony is a tradition that symbolizes the handover of continuous and complete authority over the unit and crew from one person to another.

The battalion thanked Dr. Yvonne Pangelinan, senior director of Student and Support Services; BOE vice chair SGM (ret.) Herman Atalig,

BOE member Maisie Tenorio, and both the outgoing and incoming battalion commanders' parents for showing up for this memorable occasion. The battalion also thanks Dela Cruz, SSHS vice principal Arisa Sakai-Peters, and CNMI State Teacher of the Year Donovan Tudela. (PR)



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp



Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

NOTICE OF RENEWAL CRM WATERSPORTS AND RECREATIONAL PERMIT RENEWAL DEADLINE: MAY 30TH, 2023 NOTICE TO ALL CNMI MARINE SPORTS OPERATORS

THE DIVISION COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (DCRM) OF THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY (BECQ-DCRM) WOULD LIKE TO REMIND ALL MARINE SPORT OPERATORS THAT RENEWAL OF YOUR WATERSPORTS AND RECREATIONAL PERMIT EXPIRES ON MAY 30TH, 2023. TO AVOID ANY INTERRUPTION OF YOUR WATERSPORTS ACTIVITIES, PLEASE SUBMIT **A COMPLETE CRM PERMIT APPLICATION** TO DCRM ON OR BEFORE THE MAY 30TH DEADLINE. TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSION OF YOUR CRM PERMIT APPLICATION, PLEASE ATTACH ALL REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS WITH YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION INCLUDING A COPY OF YOUR PAYMENT RECEIPT ISSUED BY THE CNMI TREASURY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO ENSURE THAT THEIR CRM PERMIT APPLICATION IS FINAL AND COMPLETE PRIOR TO SUBMISSION. SUBMISSION OF AN INCOMPLETE APPLICATION WILL BE RETURNED TO THE APPLICANT.

DUE TO DCRM'S REGULATION CHANGES AFFECTING PERMIT AND ADMINISTRATIVE FEES, DCRM WILL BE CHARGING FEES FOR RESUBMISSION OF A CRM PERMIT APPLICATION. THIS ADDITIONAL FEE IS APPLICABLE ONLY IF YOUR APPLICATION WAS RECEIVED AND FOUND TO BE INCOMPLETE AND RETURNED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT MR. NEIL TAISACAN AT ntaisacan@dcrm.gov.mp OR MS. PRIMROSE TAITANO AT ptaitano@dcrm.gov.mp OR, BY CALLING (670) 664-8300.

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

USCIS extends, expands employment OK for HK residents covered by DED

» Eligible Hong Kong residents may apply for EADs through Feb. 5, 2025

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services posted Friday a *Federal Register* notice on the extension and expansion of eligibility for Deferred Enforced Departure for Hong Kong residents. The notice also explains how eligible residents of Hong Kong may apply for Employment Authorization Documents.

On Jan. 26, 2023, President Joe Biden issued a memorandum extending and expanding DED for certain Hong Kong residents for 24 months. Eligible Hong Kong residents covered under DED as of Jan. 26, 2023, may remain in the United States through Feb. 5, 2025, and are eligible to work in the United States.

There is no application for DED. Hong Kong residents are covered under DED based on the terms described in the president's directive. Eligible Hong Kong residents may apply for an EAD by filing Form

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.

The memorandum also directs DHS to extend employment authorization for Hong Kong residents covered under DED and to provide for the prompt issuance of new or replacement documents in appropriate cases. USCIS is automatically extending the validity of Hong Kong DED-based EADs through Feb. 5, 2025, for those who already have an EAD with an A-11 category code on the card and an expiration date of Feb. 5, 2023. These EADs remain valid, even though the expiration date on the face of the card has passed. An individual does not need to apply for a new EAD to benefit from this automatic EAD extension. Individuals who want a new DED-based EAD showing a Card Expires date of Feb. 5, 2025, must file Form I-765.

DHS may provide travel authorization at its discretion to those covered under DED for Hong Kong. Individuals who wish to travel outside of the United States based on DED must file Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, to request advance parole. (USCIS)

Fremy Fred Peter
P.O. Box 505825
Saipan, MP 96950
Contact number: 670-286-9185

Pro Se Petitioner.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR THE CHANGE OF NAME OF:

MILEY FRED MISARO TORCIALA, A Minor Child

By:

FREMY FRED PETER Petitioner

FCD-CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0138
NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on June 26, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 19th day of April, 2023

/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

BOH pays tuition for employees to graduate from Chaminade U

Among the sea of graduates at Chaminade University's commencement ceremony last Saturday was a mother of five who didn't think she'd ever be able to afford a degree of her own. Linda Yoshimoto was

» **The program has now paid for 20 bank employees to graduate from college**

working full time at Bank of Hawai'i to put her daughter and two sons through college when she learned about the bank's popular employee benefit, the College Assistance Program, or CAP. With this program, the bank fully covers tuition, including fees for textbooks and materials.



Linda Yoshimoto, Bank of Hawai'i Kapolei branch manager, receives her diploma from Chaminade University. She is the 20th graduate through Bank of Hawai'i's College Assistance Program, which fully covers an employee's tuition. **BOH**

It was a lifelong goal for Yoshimoto to graduate from college, so she jumped at the chance and enrolled at Chaminade University. With

three of her own children in college, including one at Chaminade, and two younger sons at home, she obtained her bachelor's degree in psy-



Linda Yoshimoto poses with her family after receiving her diploma. **BOH**

KHS' Ayuyu Battalion holds end-of-the-year ceremony



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kagman High School's Ayuyu Battalion holds its annual military ball last May 1, 2023, at the school's cafeteria, preceded by the change of command ceremony where the new battalion commander, Kenae Borja, became the new Ayuyu Battalion commander.

Kagman High School's Ayuyu Battalion conducted its annual military ball last May 1, 2023, at the school's cafeteria, preceded by the change of command ceremony where the new battalion commander, Kenae Borja, was promoted to C/LTC and became the new Ayuyu Battalion commander.

This was soon followed by the awards ceremony, during which cadets received the following awards: the Military Officers Association Award was given to one cadet, the Military Order of the World Wars was given to one cadet; the Superior Cadets award was given to four cadets; the Military Order of the Purple Hearts was given to one cadet; Daughters of the American Revolution was given to two cadets; Sons of the American Revolution was given to three cadets; Cadet of the Semester was given to two cadets; Cadet of the Year was given to one cadet; Distinguished Cadet was given

to one cadet; Distinguished Scholastic Excellence was given to one cadet; Star Performer was given to three cadets; and Citizenship Awards were given to 59 cadets.

Entertainment followed soon after the presentation of the awards and a video presentation of the past school year's events were shown. Cadets also performed songs and dances. The KHS RCC club members and the Neisian Harmony also performed. A raffle for all attendees was also held with great prizes from Friendly Market as well as Saipan World Resort waterpark tickets. The night ended with a retiring of the colors around 9pm.

Among those in attendance were Board of Education member Herman Atalig, Marianas High School senior Army instructor Lt. Col. Gregory Sablan, school principal Benjamin Jones, vice principal Francisca Bondoc, cadets, and their parents. **(PR)**

chology with a minor in history while continuing her job as a Bank of Hawai'i branch manager in Kapolei.

"As children get older, they tend to wean off their parents, but this brought us together in such a special and meaningful way," said Yoshimoto. "It could get

pretty hectic sometimes, especially when we were all doing finals at the same time. But we relied on each other a lot."

Yoshimoto graduated with honors and is now the latest of 20 Bank of Hawai'i employees to obtain the degree of their choice through CAP.

Understanding that the cost of obtaining a higher education can be a deterrent, CAP allows employees without

a college degree to achieve their educational goals by paying 100% of their tuition upfront. Fees for textbooks and materials are covered, and participants are given an extra paid day off from work during final exams so

they can focus on studying. With the goal of helping individuals reach their personal educational dreams, employees are not required to remain with the company upon graduation.

Since its inception in 2016, 20 employees have earned degrees from Chaminade University or an associate degree from the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges with more than \$1.7 million in educational costs covered. **(BOH)**

ON THE NET

Video: <https://f.io/d4Cd-Qck>

PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

for the Distribution Automation Island-Wide Project

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 4:30 pm** in the CUC Conference Room No. 17 on the third floor of the Joeten Dandan Building for the **Distribution Automation Island-Wide Project**. This proposed project to be funded under the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE): **Preventing Outage and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid**. Pursuant to the Open Government Act (OGA) (1 CMC Section 9901 est. Seq).

The purpose of the public hearing is to inform the general public of CUC's proposed solution for energy reliability enhancement in Saipan. The demand for high quality power delivery services is part of CUC's corporate mission and CUC acknowledges the need to strive for continual improvement in the delivery of power services.

The public is encouraged to attend this hearing to learn more about this proposed project.

Interest parties may submit comments for this project to **Adrian Reyes, Project Manager** at adrian.reyes@cucgov.org with the subject line titled, **"Comments for Public Hearing: Distribution Automation Island-Wide Project."** The deadline to submit comments is by **4:30 pm on Tuesday, May 23, 2023.**



THIRD FLOOR, JOETEN DANDAN BLDG.
P.O. BOX 501220 SAIPAN, MP 96950

T. (670) 664-4282 • F. (670) 235-5131
www.cucgov.org



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055

Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962

E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 03-2023

Opening date: May 08, 2023

Closing date: May 26, 2023

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (1) ARFF Mechanic II
(1) Custodial-I
(1) Equipment Operator-I
(1) General Maintenance-I
(1) Master Electrician
(2) Ports Police Trainee

SALARY

PL 6/1 to 6/12 (\$9.27/hr to \$15.85/hr)
PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr to \$12.42/hr)
PL 4/1 to 4/12 (\$8.41/hr to \$14.38/hr)
PL 3/1 to 3/12 (\$8.01/hr to \$13.70/hr)
PL 19/1 to 19/12 (\$17.48/hr to \$29.90/hr)
PL 5/1 (\$8.83/hr)

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I
(1) Custodial-I

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr to \$12.42/hr)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, May 26, 2023.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmports.com and hrrspecialist@cnmports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Sudan rescue mission is helping the US Navy prepare for war

As the security situation deteriorates in Sudan, and thousands of US citizens remain in the war-torn country, the Navy is undertaking a mission it has done many, many times over the years: evacuations of diplomats and other Americans needing to depart a combat zone.

This is more than a humanitarian mission. The Sudan operation is providing the Navy with a chance to put some seemingly bizarre, but in fact hugely valuable, combat-support ships through their paces in a real-life situation.

Evacuations of civilians and troops are dangerous and unpredictable. Sometimes, as with the fall of Kabul in Afghanistan in 2021, they can go terribly wrong. At other times—think Vietnam in 1975—they can be chaotic but overall fairly successful. Often when the nation in question has a coast, as Sudan does on the Red Sea, the Navy conducts the bulk of the operations.

Normally, such missions would be conducted from massive amphibious warships such as the “big deck” helicopter carriers of the Wasp and America classes. These ships ferry Marines around the world, conduct amphibious attacks and carry vertical-lift jump-jets for combat strikes ashore. But the operation in Sudan, which is (so far) relatively small, looks quite different.

While there is always a risk to evacuees, in Sudan it is unlikely that either side in the civil war would deliberately target civilians. So we are seeing the use of two warships that have little offensive combat capability but excellent, adaptable logistical-support abilities: the Brunswick and the Lewis B. Puller.

I know both of these ship classes well, having played a role in their adoption over a decade ago. The Lewis B. Puller is an “expeditionary mobile base” with a crew of only

about 150 (as opposed to 5,000 on a carrier), but a huge and flexible capacity to operate helicopters, drop off special forces, provide medical and logistical support ashore, and host hundreds of civilian evacuees.

The Navy began to experiment with this type of at-sea base after the 9/11 attacks. I was heading up the tactical think tank “Deep Blue” in the aftermath of the plane striking the Pentagon. We were preparing for operations in the world’s littoral regions (shallow areas near shores) for what would become known as the Global War on Terrorism.

The Navy did not want to devote its nuclear aircraft carriers or even big-deck amphibious ships to such missions, so we looked for alternatives that were far less costly, both in terms of manpower and sticker price. These mobile bases, with hulls based on those of oilers, are large and capable—more than 750 feet long and displacing 80,000 tons. But they are a bargain at \$650 million, as compared to nearly \$15 billion for a new nuclear carrier.

The other main ship in the Sudan operation, the Brunswick, is far smaller but nearly three times speedier. Known as an “expeditionary fast transport,” the Navy commissioned six of these craft, which ride on a catamaran hull and can move at over 40 knots. At only 300 feet in length, they can carry more than 600 tons of cargo and, for brief periods, hundreds of passengers. Operated by a tiny crew of around 40, they even have a small but capable helicopter deck.

As commander of US Southern Command in the 2000s, I experimented with an early variant of this class for Caribbean counternarcotics operations, where we very successfully embarked alongside Coast Guard law-enforcement detachments.

Because neither of these ships is armed beyond light machine guns, a Navy destroyer is typically deployed with

By JAMES STAVRIDIS

Bloomberg Opinion



James Stavridis is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. A retired U.S. Navy admiral, former supreme allied commander of NATO, and dean emeritus of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, he is vice chairman of global affairs at the Carlyle Group. He is on the boards of American Water Works, Fortinet, PreVeil, NFP, Ankura Consulting Group, Titan Holdings, Michael Baker and Neuberger Berman, and has advised Shield Capital, a firm that invests in the cybersecurity sector.

them to bring defensive firepower. In Sudan, the Truxton, an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, accompanied the Puller and Brunswick. Drones are also being used to provide overwatch ashore in case of any threat to the civilian evacuation operations.

These two new ship classes have a broad range of uses, both in noncombatant roles like evacuations but also in support of combat. To name a few potential missions: operations in the island chains of the western Pacific; oil and gas protection off the coast of Norway; counterterrorism at the Horn of Africa or islands in the Philippines; natural-disaster relief; medical diplomacy; and further evacuations of noncombatants.

The nature of security is far broader than simply lobbing Tomahawk missiles, dropping precision-guided bombs or landing Marines. The Brunswick and Puller are showing a wide spectrum of abilities for conducting operations fit for the modern world.

AI is helping us read minds, but should we?

Since mind reading has only existed in the realms of fantasy and fiction, it seems fair to apply the phrase to a system that uses brain scan data to decipher stories that a person has read, heard, or even just imagined. It’s the latest in a series of spooky linguistic feats fueled by artificial intelligence, and it’s left people wondering what kinds of nefarious uses humanity will find for such advances.

Even the lead researcher on the project, computational neuroscientist Alexander Huth, called his team’s sudden success with using noninvasive functional magnetic resonance imaging to decode thoughts “kind of terrifying” in the pages of *Science*.

But what’s also terrifying is the fact that any of us could come to suffer the horrific condition the technology was developed to address—paralysis so profound that it robs people of the ability even to speak. That can happen gradually through neurological diseases such as ALS or suddenly, as with a stroke that rips away all ability to communicate in an instant. Take for example, the woman who described an ordeal of being fully aware for years while treated as a vegetable. Or the man who recounted being frozen, terrified and helpless as a doctor asked his wife if they should withdraw life support and let him die.

Magazine editor Jean-Dominique Bauby, who suffered a permanent version of the condition, used a system of eye blinks to write the book “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.” What more could he have done given a mind decoder?

Each mind is unique, so the system developed by Huth and his team only works after being trained for hours on a single person. You can’t aim it at a someone new and learn anything, at least for now, Huth and collaborator Jerry Tang explained in a press event leading up to a publication of their work in last Monday’s *Nature Neuroscience*.

And yet their advance opens prospects that are both scary and enticing: A better understanding of the workings of our brains, a new window into mental illness, and maybe a way for us to know our own minds. Balanced against that is the concern that one day such technology may not require an individual’s consent, allowing it to

invade the last refuge of human privacy.

Huth, who is an assistant professor at the University of Texas, was one of the first test subjects. He and two volunteers had to remain motionless for a total of 16 hours each in a functional MRI, which tracks brain activity through the flow of oxygenated blood, listening to stories from *The Moth Radio Hour* and the *Modern Love* podcast, chosen because they tend to be enjoyable and engaging.

This trained the system, which produced a model for predicting patterns of brain activity associated with different sequences of words. Then there was a trial-and-error period, during which the model was used to reconstruct new stories from the subjects’ brain scans, harnessing the power of a version of ChatGPT to predict which word would likely follow from another.

Eventually the system was able to “read” brain scan data to decipher the gist of what the volunteers had been hearing. When the subjects heard, “I don’t have my driver’s license yet,” the system came up with, “she has not even started to learn to drive.” For some reason, Huth explained, it’s bad with pronouns, unable to figure out who did what to whom.

Weirder still, the subjects were shown videos with no sound, and the system could make inferences about what they were seeing. In one, a character kicked down another, and the system used the brain scan to come up with, “he knocked me to the ground.” The pronouns seemed scrambled, but the action was spookily on target.

The people in the scanner might never have been thinking in words at all. “We’re definitely getting at something deeper than language,” Tang said. “There’s a lot more information in brain data than we initially thought.”

This isn’t a rogue lab doing mad science but part of a long-term effort that’s been pursued by scientists around the world. In a 2021 *The New Yorker* article, researchers described projects leading up to this breakthrough. One shared a vision of a Silicon Valley-funded endeavor that could streamline the cumbersome functional MRI scanner into a wearable “thinking hat.” People would wear the hat, along with sensors, to record their surroundings to decode their inner worlds and mind meld with others—even per-

By FAYE FLAM

Bloomberg Opinion



Faye Flam is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering science. She is host of the *Follow the Science* podcast.

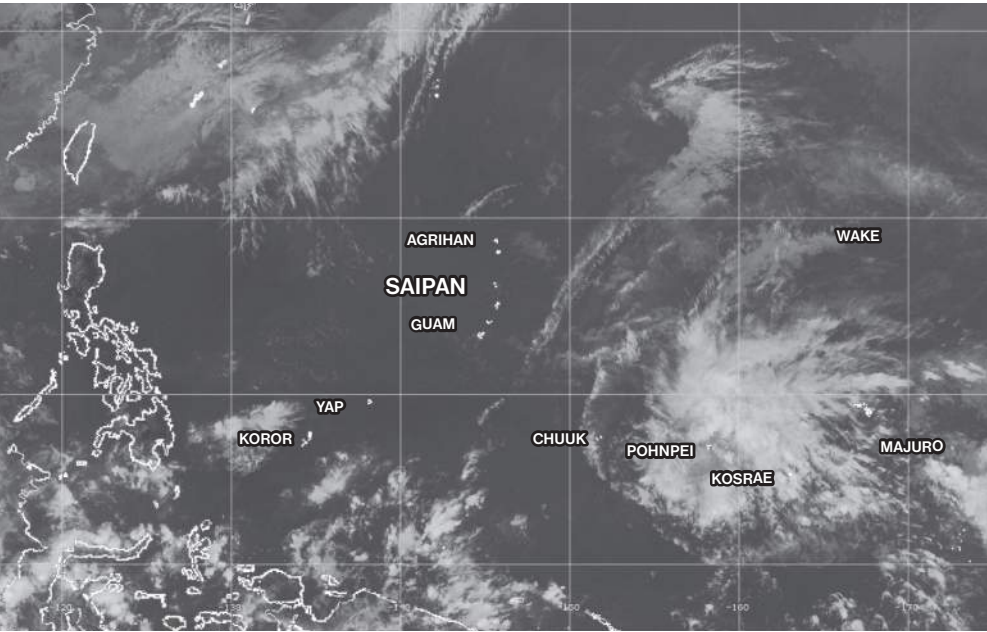
haps communicate with other species. The recent breakthroughs make this future seem closer. For something that’s never existed, mind reading seems to crop up regularly in popular culture, often reflecting a desire for lost or never-realized connection, as Gordon Lightfoot sang of in “If You Could Read my Mind.” We envy the Vulcans their capacity for mind melding.

Historical precedent, however, warns that people can do harm by simply taking advantage of the belief that they have a mind-reading technology—just as authorities have manipulated juries, crime suspects, job candidates and others with the belief that a polygraph is an accurate lie detector. Scientific reviews have shown that the polygraph does not work as people think it does. But then, scientific studies have shown our brains don’t work the way we think they do either.

So, the important work of giving voice back to people whose voices have been lost to illness or injury must be undertaken with deep thought for ethical considerations; and an awareness of the many ways in which that work can be subverted. Already there’s a whole field of neuroethics, and experts have evaluated the use of earlier, less effective versions of this technology. But this breakthrough alone warrants a new focus. Should doctors or family members be allowed to use systems such as Huth’s to attempt to ask about a paralyzed patient’s desire to live or die? What if it reports back that the person chose death? What if it misunderstood? These are questions we all should start grappling with.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Isolated showers. Partly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
84°	77°	85°	77°	83°	78°	83°	78°	83°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:44 AM, MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar showing mostly cloudy skies with isolated to low-end scattered showers, mainly across the southern Marianas. Buoys and recent altimetry passes indicating seas of 4 to 6 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	86° / 77°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°	
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:50 AM	6:36 PM
Wednesday	5:50 AM	6:36 PM
Thursday	5:49 AM	6:37 PM
Friday	5:49 AM	6:37 PM
Saturday	5:49 AM	6:37 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	8:34 AM	10:16 PM
Wednesday	-	9:37 AM	11:17 PM
Thursday	-	10:42 AM	-
Friday	12:12 AM	11:45 AM	-
Saturday	1:02 AM	12:46 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Rain/Thunder/Wind	66° / 59°	
Beijing	Cloudy	83° / 54°	
Hong Kong	Cloudy	77° / 72°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	83° / 73°	
London	Rain/Thunder	63° / 49°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	72° / 55°	
Manila	Thunderstorms	93° / 80°	
Melbourne	Showers	58° / 51°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	81° / 75°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	78° / 56°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	73° / 53°	
Paris	Rain	61° / 50°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	70° / 56°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	77° / 59°	
Salem	Thunderstorms	83° / 67°	
San Francisco	Showers	60° / 50°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	73° / 47°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	69° / 51°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	80° / 60°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:18 AM	Low Tide	1.44	
8:48 AM	High Tide	1.94	
4:27 PM	Low Tide	-0.33	
11:59 PM	High Tide	1.99	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 30, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA184	10:25PM	4:15AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
				UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun	3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business



MARK RABAGO

Owner Aofia Tuiolosega said Aofia's Culture Shop's goal is to keep the island culture alive by making mwars, leis, and other cultural items available for purchase.

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aofia's Culture Shop keeps island kultura alive

Aofia's Culture Shop as its name already denotes tries to keep Pacific island culture alive with the plethora of island- and tribal-theme items they sell.

Owner Aofia Tuiolosega said their quaint little shop in Chalan Kanoa soft-opened last year but they're still waiting for their sign to come up to make their opening finally official.

"Our goal is to keep our culture alive. So every item we sell here is a cultural piece. Like the mwars that are from all over the Pacific and Micronesia. These are flower head crowns and leis because mwars and leis are for all occasions and not just for graduations. We have mwars and leis for funerals, weddings, etc. and then all the other little



MARK RABAGO

Aofia's Culture Shop is located across Dial Rent to Own along Beach Road in Chalan Kanoa.



MARK RABAGO

leis, Aofia's Culture Shop only charges a flat fee of \$25 for their flower garlands.

"When you purchase the lei for \$25 the labor comes for free. Let's say you want money there, right? You just bring your own money, whatever increments like \$1 or \$5 and we put it on your lei for free. No surprise fees," said Tuiolosega.

The daughter of cultural icon Flowerpot Salas said she originally branched out with her own store after realizing the need to preserve island culture for the next generation.

"Mom didn't want to lock herself down into one building. She wanted to be mobile and be out there with the community. So she said 'just open your own store' and then she'll stay in the community."

Aside from the leis and mwars, Aofia's Culture Shop also carries several island- and tribal-themed bags, slippers, and accessories.

"The bags have a modern fashion theme. We all like to travel and when we go off-island we want something to show off our home, like the CNMI seal."

Bags at Aofia's Culture Shop retail at \$80 for the whole set and it comes with a flower, while the slippers of varied island-inspired designs are only \$20.

Tuiolosega said her shop also displays and sells local artists'

masterpieces and even makes their own pure coconut oil.

"Culture is very important to our family. So we try to keep it alive in our business. By having these readily made to physically purchase you're having a piece of our culture and there's a lot of stories behind all of these pieces. They're all different pieces, and they have different meanings to our culture. So it's not just a business, it's a business that also tries to preserve our culture," she said.

As tourists slowly return to the islands, some have wandered to Aofia's Culture Shop and Tuiolosega welcomes them even if they don't really purchase anything.

"Tourists love to come by and model a piece of our flowers. We let them try on all our products for free and when they go back home it's like they're promoting the islands to potential tourists."

Aofia's Culture Shop is open Monday through Friday, from 10am to 8pm, and Saturdays from 11am to 5pm. Outside of those hours, Tuiolosega said she can make appointments for emergency purchases.

Aofia's Culture Shop is located across Dial Rent to Own along Beach Road in Chalan Kanoa. For more information, call (670) 287-7131 or email aofiasenmi@gmail.com.

Yellen: 'No good options' if Congress fails to act on debt

WASHINGTON (AP)—Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Sunday that there are "no good options" for the United States to avoid an economic "calamity" if Congress fails to raise the nation's borrowing limit of \$31.381 trillion in the coming weeks. She did not rule out President Joe Biden bypassing lawmakers and acting on his own to try to avert a first-ever federal default.

Her comments added even more urgency to a high-stakes meeting Tuesday between Biden and congressional leaders from both parties.

Democrats and Republi-

cans are at loggerheads over whether the debt limit should even be the subject of negotiation. GOP lawmakers, led by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy of California, are demanding spending cuts in return for raising the borrowing limit, while Biden has said the threat of default shouldn't be used as leverage in budget talks.

Yellen, interviewed on ABC's "This Week," painted a dire picture of what might happen if the borrowing limit is not increased before the Treasury Department runs out of what it calls "extraordinary measures" to operate

under the current cap. That time, she said, is expected to come in early June, perhaps as soon as June 1.

"Whether it's defaulting on interest payments that are due on the debt or payments due for Social Security recipients or to Medicare providers, we would simply not have enough cash to meet all of our obligations," she said. "And it's widely agreed that financial and economic chaos would ensue."

An increase in the debt limit would not authorize new federal spending. It would only allow borrowing to pay for what Congress has already approved.

Biden hopes strong job market means soft landing for economy

WASHINGTON (AP)—For President Joe Biden, the past few days have raised hopes that the U.S. economy can stick a soft landing—possibly avoiding a recession as the 2024 election nears.

Most U.S. adults have downbeat feelings about Biden's economic leadership, as high inflation has overshadowed a strong jobs market. It's long been economic orthodoxy that efforts to beat back inflation by the Federal Reserve would result in unemployment rising and the country sinking into recession.

But to the president and some economists, the April jobs report issued Friday chal-

lenged that theory with its 3.4% unemployment rate and 253,000 jobs gained.

The strong jobs report came after a Wednesday Fed meeting that suggested the U.S. central bank might pause on its rate hikes, the primary tool for cutting inflation from its still high 5% to something closer to 2%. Talks are also starting over the need to raise the debt limit — with Biden inviting congressional leaders to the White House for a Tuesday meeting in hopes of ultimately getting a commitment to avoid a default.

For a president seeking a second term, Biden struck a confident tone Friday when

meeting with aides even as he pushed GOP lawmakers for a clean increase on the debt cap.

"We're trending in the right direction and I think we're making real progress," he said about the overall economy, telling Republican lawmakers to not "undo all this progress" with the debt limit standoff.

The economy could still stumble. Several economists forecast a recession this year, considering the wild cards of the war in Ukraine, global tensions and the debt limit fight. But the steady job gains have suggested to some policymakers and economists that it's possible to curb inflation without layoffs.

Nation

‘MY CAREER OF 280 YEARS’:

Biden jokes off 2024 age concerns

WASHINGTON (AP)—Joe Biden served in the Senate for 270 years. He used to be three years older than his sister Valerie, but now has 20 years on her. And the fourth U.S. president — whom Biden affectionally calls “Jimmy” Madison — is a good friend.

All kidding aside, the 80-year-old Biden will tell you, he is at the end of his career, not the beginning. He’s been doing this for a long time. And he’s gotten a “hell of a lot of wisdom” over those years, making him deserving of a second term.

As Biden, the oldest president in U.S. history, embarks on his reelection campaign, he is increasingly musing aloud about his advanced age, cracking self-deprecating jokes and framing his decades in public life as a plus, hoping to convince voters his age is an asset rather than a vulnerability.

In short, he’s trying to own it.

“I stand here humbled being the first sitting president of the United States to have an opportunity to speak at Ebenezer Sunday service,” Biden said in January at the historic Atlanta church where Martin Luther King, Jr. was the co-pastor. “You’ve been around for 136 years. I know I look like it, but I haven’t.”

The octogenarian president’s comments about his age can be serious, woven into broader remarks and often used to underscore a broader point.

When Biden told the Irish



President Joe Biden laughs as he speaks during the White House Correspondents' Association dinner at the Washington Hilton in Washington, Saturday, April 29, 2023. AP

parliament last month that he has never been more optimistic about the future, he notably added, “And I’m at the end of my career, not the beginning.”

“The only thing I bring to this career after my age—as

you can see how old I am—but is a little bit of wisdom,” Biden continued to the approving crowd. “I come to the job with more experience than any president in American history. It doesn’t make me better or worse, but it

gives me few excuses.”

Other times, Biden—his mood buoyed by a crowd full of supporters, whether among Democratic lawmakers or at a lively union hall—is often speaking off-the-cuff, eager to make the audience laugh by poking a little fun at himself. At the annual White House Correspondents’ Dinner on April 29, Biden made his age an early—and fre-

quent—punchline.

“You guys were founded 122 years ago—that’s not when I got endorsed,” Biden told a crowd of machine operators and engineers with the International Union of Operating Engineers in Accokeek, Md., in April. He referenced “my career of 280 years here” at a Black History Month reception before being interrupted by laughter, and at an Air

Force event last month, Biden noted that President Dwight Eisenhower addressed the first class of the Air Force Academy more than six decades ago but that “I wasn’t there ... no matter what the press says.”

Whether deliberate or candid, it’s nonetheless a strategy that evokes how Ronald Reagan defused questions about his age—then 73—during the 1984 campaign. In a debate against 56-year-old Democrat Walter Mondale, Reagan pledged he would not make age an issue nor “exploit, for political purposes, my opponent’s youth and inexperience.”

Biden is “doing exactly what he should be doing. He’s embracing it, he’s having fun with it, he’s doing exactly what Ronald Reagan did—injecting humor and self-deprecation into it,” said Michael LaRosa, a former press secretary for first lady Jill Biden who also worked on the president’s 2020 campaign. “By saying the quiet part out loud, everyone is in on the joke. He knows his age, and he’s not pretending to be somebody he’s not. And that’s the most important quality in a candidate.”

The president could also find himself with a general election challenger nearly as old as he is, potentially neutralizing the issue of his own age. Donald Trump, the leading Republican candidate, is 76 years old, although voters have shown less concern about his age and sharpness compared to that of Biden, according to some polls. Trump, for his part, insists the issue is “not age”—it’s Biden’s mental acuity.

Source: Investigators examine ideology of Texas gunman

ALLEN, Texas (AP)—Federal officials are looking into whether the gunman who killed eight people at a Dallas-area mall expressed an interest in white supremacist ideology Sunday as they work to discern a motive for the attack, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official cautioned the investigation is in its early stages.

Federal agents have been reviewing social media accounts they believe were used by Mauricio Garcia, 33, and posts that expressed interest in white supremacist and neo-Nazi views, said the official, who could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Garcia also had a patch on his chest when he was killed by police that read “RWDS,” an acronym for the phrase “Right Wing Death Squad,” which is popular among right-wing extremists and

white supremacy groups, the official said.

In addition to reviewing social media posts, federal agents have interviewed family members and associates of Garcia to ask about his ideological beliefs, the official said. Investigators are also reviewing financial records, other online posts they believe Garcia made and other electronic media, according to the official.

Allen Police Chief Brian Harvey declined Sunday evening to answer questions from the AP, saying of the investigation, “we actually don’t have a lot.”

The Texas Department of Public Safety identified Garcia as suspected of killing eight people at a Texas outlet mall, a day after the attack turned an afternoon of shopping into a massacre.

Garcia was fatally shot Saturday by a police officer who happened to be near the suburban Dallas mall.

A law enforcement offi-

cial said investigators have been searching a Dallas motel near an interstate where Garcia had been staying. The official said police also found multiple weapons at the scene after Garcia was killed, including an AR-15-style rifle and a handgun.

Two law enforcement officials said investigators also searched a Dallas home connected to the suspect. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss details of an ongoing investigation.

A woman who lives three houses down from the low brick house said she saw a large group of uniformed officers go into the home Saturday between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.

“They went in like real fast, and I seen them do that like twice,” said Marsha Alexander, who said officers were still in the area when she went to bed around 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. They were gone by Sunday morning.

SUV driver hits crowd at Texas bus stop near border; 8 dead

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP)—The death toll has risen to eight after an SUV slammed into a crowd of people waiting for a bus Sunday outside a migrant shelter in the border city of Brownsville, Texas. At least 10 others were injured, police said, as they prepared to arrest the hospitalized driver.

With no bench at the unmarked city bus stop, some of the victims were sitting on the curb around 8:30 a.m. when the driver hit them, surveillance video from the Bishop Enrique San Pedro Ozanam Center showed. Brownsville police investigator Martin Sandoval, who confirmed the latest death Sunday evening, said police did not know whether the collision was intentional.

Shelter director Victor Maldonado said the SUV ran up the curb, flipped and con-

tinued moving for about 200 feet (60 meters). Some people walking on the sidewalk about 30 feet (9 meters) from the main group were also hit, Maldonado said. Witnesses detained the driver as he tried to run away and held him until police arrived, he said.

“This SUV, a Range Rover, just ran the light that was about 100 feet (30 meters) away and just went through the people who were sitting there in the bus stop,” said Maldonado, who reviewed the shelter’s surveillance video.

Victims struck by the vehicle were waiting for the bus to return to downtown Brownsville after having spent the night at the overnight shelter, said Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

Most of the victims were

Venezuelan men, Maldonado said. Brownsville has seen a surge of Venezuelan migrants over the last two weeks for unclear reasons, authorities said. On Thursday, 4,000 of about 6,000 migrants in Border Patrol custody in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley were Venezuelan.

The driver was taken to the hospital for injuries sustained when the car rolled over, Sandoval said. There were no passengers in the car, and police didn’t immediately know the driver’s name or age, Sandoval said Sunday afternoon.

Sandoval said there are three possible explanations for the collision: “It could be intoxication; it could be an accident; or it could be intentional. In order for us to find out exactly what happened, we have to eliminate the other two.

Asia

Kishida expresses sympathy for Korean colonial victims



AP

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, right, shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida during a joint press conference after their meeting at the presidential office in Seoul Sunday, May 7, 2023.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Japan's prime minister expressed sympathy for the suffering of Korean forced laborers during Japan's colonial rule, as he and his South Korean counterpart Sunday renewed their resolve to overcome historical grievances and strengthen cooperation in the face of shared challenges such as North Korea's nuclear program.

Comments by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida during his summit with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol — their second meeting in less than two months — were closely watched in South Korea, where many still harbor strong resentment against Japan's 1910-45 colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula.

Yoon has faced domestic criticism that he had preemptively made concessions to Tokyo without getting corresponding steps in return. Kishida's statement, which avoided a new, direct apology over the colonization but still sympathized with the Korean victims, suggests he felt pressure to say something to maintain momentum for an effort to improve ties.

"And personally, I have strong pain in my heart as I

think of the extreme difficulty and sorrow that many people had to suffer under the severe environment in those days," Kishida told a joint news conference with Yoon, referring to the Japanese colonial period.

He said he believes "it is my responsibility as prime minister of Japan to cooperate with" Yoon to forge stronger relations.

Kishida arrived in South Korea earlier Sunday for a two-day visit, which reciprocates a mid-March trip to Tokyo by Yoon and marks the first exchange of visits between the leaders of the Asian neighbors in 12 years.

The back-to-back summits were largely meant to resolve the countries' bitter disputes caused by the 2018 court rulings in South Korea that ordered two Japanese companies to financially compensate some of their aging former Korean employees for colonial-era forced labor. Japan has refused to abide by the verdicts, arguing that all compensation issues were already settled when the two countries normalized ties in 1965.

The wrangling led to the countries downgrading each other's trade status and Seoul's previous liberal government threatening to spike

a military intelligence-sharing pact. Their strained ties complicated U.S. efforts to build a stronger regional alliance to better cope with rising Chinese influence and North Korean nuclear threats.

In March, however, Yoon's conservative government took a major step toward mending the ties by announcing it would use local funds to compensate the forced labor victims without demanding contributions from Japanese companies. Later in March, Yoon traveled to Tokyo to meet with Kishida, and the two agreed to resume leadership-level visits and other talks. Their governments have since taken steps to withdraw their economic retaliatory steps.

Yoon's push, however, drew strong backlash from some of the forced labor victims and his liberal rivals at home, who have demanded direct compensation from the Japanese companies. Yoon has defended his move, saying greater cooperation with Japan is required to jointly tackle North Korea's advancing nuclear program, the intensifying U.S.-China strategic rivalry and global supply chain challenges.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "pained by the loss of lives" and announced compensation to the victims' families in a tweet.

Boating accidents are common in India, where many vessels are overcrowded and have inadequate safety equipment.

In September 2020, 12 people drowned when a sightseeing boat capsized on the swollen Godavari River in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. In May 2018, 30 people died when a boat capsized in the same region.

dren who had come for a ride on the boat during their school vacation, Sports Minister V Abdurahiman told the Press Trust of India news agency, adding that four people in critical condition were admitted to a hospital.

The state's chief minister, who will visit the area Monday, tweeted his condolences to the victims' families and urged the district's authorities to oversee the rescue.

Monday has been declared a day of official mourning, PTI reported, quoting a government statement.

Tourist boat capsizes in southern India, at least 22 dead

NEW DELHI (AP)—A double-decker boat carrying more than 30 passengers capsized off a beach in southern India on Sunday night, and more than 22 people including children died, officials said.

Police officer Abdul Nazar said the rescue teams were expecting to recover more bodies from inside the boat. He said authorities were investigating what caused the tourist boat to overturn near Thoovaltheeram beach in Tanur, a coastal town in Kerala state's Malappuram district.

The dead included chil-

World

Worries grow about Ukraine nuke plant amid evacuations

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Anxiety about the safety of Europe's largest nuclear power plant grew Sunday after the Moscow-installed governor of the Ukrainian region where it is located ordered civilian evacuations, including from the city where most plant workers live.

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Grossi has spent months trying to persuade Russian and Ukrainian officials to establish a security zone around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to prevent the war from causing a radiation leak.

The evacuations ordered by the Russia-backed governor of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia province, Yegeny Balitsky, raised fears that fighting in the area would intensify. Balitsky on Friday ordered civilians to leave 18 Russian-occupied communities, including Enerhodar, home to most of the plant staff.

More than 1,500 people had been evacuated from two unspecified cities in the region as of Sunday, Balitsky said. The Ukrainian General Staff confirmed the evacuation of Enerhodar was underway.

Moscow's troops seized the plant soon after invading Ukraine last year, but Ukrainian employees have continued to run it during the occupation, at times under extreme duress.

Ukraine has regularly fired

at the Russian side of the lines, while Russia has repeatedly shelled Ukrainian-held communities across the Dnieper River. The fighting has intensified as Ukraine prepares to launch a long-promised counteroffensive to reclaim ground taken by Russia.

Ukrainian authorities on Sunday said that a 72-year-old woman was killed and three others were wounded when Russian forces fired more than 30 shells at the city of Nikopol, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) across the river from the plant.

Grossi said the evacuation of civilians suggested a further escalation.

"The general situation in the area near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is becoming increasingly unpredictable and potentially dangerous," Grossi warned Saturday.

"We must act now to prevent the threat of a severe nuclear accident and its associated consequences for the population and the environment. This major nuclear facility must be protected," he said.

Although none of the plant's six reactors are operating because of the war, the station needs a reliable power supply for cooling systems essential to preventing a potentially catastrophic radiation disaster.

Analysts have for months pointed to the southern Za-

porizhzhia region as one of the possible targets of Ukraine's expected spring counteroffensive, speculating that Kyiv's forces might try to choke off Russia's "land corridor" to the Crimean Peninsula and split Russian forces in two by pressing on to the Azov Sea coast.

Balitsky said Ukraine's forces had intensified attacks on the area in the past several days.

Some of the fiercest ongoing fighting is in the eastern city of Bakhmut, where Ukrainian forces are still clinging to a position on the western outskirts despite Russia trying to take the city for more than nine months.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Sunday that Moscow's forces had captured two more districts in the city's west and northwest, but provided no further details.

Ukraine's Special Operations Forces on Saturday accused Russia of using phosphorus in the city and on Sunday released a new video showing the telltale white fire from such munitions.

International law prohibits the use of white phosphorus or other incendiary weapons—munitions designed to set fire to objects or cause burn injuries—in areas where there could be concentrations of civilians, though it can also be used for illumination or to create smoke screens.

WORLD BRIEFS

Over 200 dead, many more missing after Congo floods

KALEHE, Congo (AP)—The death toll from flash floods and landslides in eastern Congo has risen beyond 200, with many more people still missing, according to local authorities in the province of South Kivu. Thomas Bakege, administrator of Kalehe, the worst-hit territory, told reporters on the scene Saturday that 203 bodies had been recovered so far, but that efforts to find others were continuing. In the village of Nyamukubi, where hundreds of homes were washed away, rescue workers and survivors

near a rescue workers post.

Grieving survivor Anuarite Zikujwa said she had lost her entire family, including her in-laws, as well as many of her neighbors. "The whole village has been turned into a wasteland. There's only stones left and we can't even tell where our land once was," she said.

Fire in gold mine kills at least 27, Peruvian officials say

LIMA, Peru (AP)—A fire broke out deep in a gold mine in southern Peru and killed at least 27 workers during an overnight shift, Peruvian authorities reported. The Yanacuihua mining company said in a statement that a total of 175 workers had been safely evacuated after the accident, which happened late Friday or early Saturday. It said the 27 dead worked for

a contractor that specializes in mining. Government officials said the cause of the incident was under investigation. Some news reports said preliminary investigations indicated an explosion might have been set off by a short circuit in a part of the mine about 100 meters (330 feet) below the surface. Relatives of the victims were brought by buses to the mine in Yanacuihua in the Arequipa region, where they were briefed by security agents. Some sat in front of posters at the entrance to the mine to wait for the bodies of their loved ones. Marcelina Aguirre said her husband was among the dead. She said he had told her there were risks at the mine. "We are very worried, very sad we are, to lose a husband, leaving two abandoned children," she said.

Overdrive

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

To those who regularly experience intense snowfalls, long bouts of atmospheric rivers or, say, 25 inches in seven hours, as Fort Lauderdale experienced last month, you just might need a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Yet most all-wheel drive vehicles are priced for people with more money than sense. Given these inflationary times, one of the most affordable all-wheel-drive vehicles on the market makes more sense than ever: the 2024 Subaru Impreza.

Offered in \$22,995 Base, \$24,995 Sport and \$27,885 RS trim, the Impreza stands out in its class for its affordability and basic inherent goodness.

Among compact cars, the Impreza boasts the highest percentage still on the road after 10 years according to Experian, higher even than Civic or Corolla. And the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has named it a Top Safety Pick for 15 consecutive years. And it's been a fave of Consumer Reports forever, or so it seems.

So, the Subaru Impreza is durable, safe, reliable and affordable. Sounds good, and it gets better with the introduction of the redesigned 2024 model.

Now in its sixth generation, the new Impreza comes only as a five-door hatchback, the model that most Impreza buyers have chosen in the past. Given auto buyers preference for SUVs, that's hardly a surprise. Another change will upset a small, but loyal, segment of Subaru cognoscenti: It's no longer offered with a manual transmission. It now comes

The 2024 Subaru Impreza is an affordable foul-weather friend



The 2024 Subaru Impreza RS.

SUBARU/TNS

NUTS & BOLTS

- **Base price:** \$22,995-\$27,885
- **Engine:** 2.5-liter horizontally-opposed four-cylinder
- **Horsepower/Torque:** 182/178 pound-feet
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway):** 26/33 mpg
- **Fuel required:** 87 Octane
- **Length/Width/Height:** 176.2/70.1/58.3 inches
- **Ground clearance:** 5.1 inches
- **Cargo capacity:** 20.4-56 cubic feet

with a standard continuously variable transmission with an 8-speed manual mode. Nice, but far from a suitable substi-

tute for those who like to roll their own.

The Impreza is a good choice for those who would love a Crosstrek, but don't care about its extra 3.6 inches of ground clearance. After all, they're the same body shell. The Impreza is a bit more car-like in demeanor. It remains the same size as its predecessor and now features standard LED lighting. Engineers also used aluminum fenders to save weight. Built on Subaru's Global Platform, the Impreza's body torsional structural rigidity is 10% better than before, while springs were softened to offset the added stiffness.

Powering the Base and Sport models is last year's 2.0-liter horizontally-opposed



2.0-liter four-cylinder rated at 152 horsepower and 145 pound-feet of torque. Sportier RS models get a slight bump in power thanks to its larger 2.5-liter four that generates 182 horsepower and 178 pound-feet of torque. As you might expect, all-wheel drive is standard, as is torque vectoring, which applies the brakes to the inside wheels when cornering to improve handling. The powertrain also features stop/start technology, which

shuts off the engine when you come to a stop to conserve fuel and avoid idling. It instantly starts when you lift your foot from the brake.

The Impreza's all-wheel drive imparts a measure of confidence, with little rubberbanding from the driveline. And while our RS trim model had a manual transmission mode, it's a pale imitation of the real thing, especially since there's little of the engine braking that conventional

transmissions provide. With minimal body lean and no excess bouncing after bumps, you'll be surprised by how far you can push this pleasant little hatchback. With 30 extra ponies under the hood, the Impreza didn't feel as powerful as its nomenclature might suggest.

The performance most drivers care about, however, is the infotainment system. Sport and RS models get a large 11.4-inch touchscreen that includes wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and a wireless device charger. And even base models get a USB-A port. The sizable screen and large on-screen buttons are easy to read, understand and operate.

But interior ambiance proves functional, but not artful. Even in its monochromatic color scheme, there's a lot going on visually, with lots of seams and ridges on instrument panel and door panels. The seats are fairly supportive and not restrictive for the broader of beam. The heated seats warm up quickly, but the Impreza lacks optional ventilated seats or a heated steering wheel. Road noise moderate at worst, but not objectionable.

No, it's not as sporty as some compacts, nor will its interior trick you into believing you bought something extravagant. What the Subaru Impreza offers is an all-wheel-drive hatchback at the price of a front-wheel-drive compact car. And while it could use a few more ponies in RS trim, overall, it seems to be a perfectly practical all-wheel-drive hatch at a price that won't break the bank. It's an affordable foul-weather friend, and a truly impressive Impreza.

Why is clutch sticking?

Q: I have a 2015 Ford Focus SE with a 1.0-liter EcoBoost engine and a manual transmission. Intermittently, the clutch does not return to its normal position and has to be lifted with the toe of my left foot. It does not affect the car's operation. I understand that the clutch uses brake fluid in its function, but all fluids are at their proper levels. Ford had it for two days but said they couldn't replicate the problem.

W.R., Chicago

A: My first hunch is a bad clutch release bearing. But there are other things. The slave cylinder may be failing or the clutch master is failing. The next time you take your car in, ask to ride along with a service tech. If your dealer balks, try an independent shop.

■■■

Q: I agree with your comments to the reader requesting help to solve the ABS fault light. Changing out all the wheel sensors would be a good first step. I did the same on my 2002 Tacoma. At this point it would have been good to explain what the ABS system will do to improve vehicle safety during hard braking on icy and slippery roads.

T.G., Monticello, Minnesota

A: You are right about the benefit of ABS on slippery, but not icy, roads. Many people used to pump brakes, which is what the ABS does. But ABS pumps the brakes only on the wheels los-

ing traction. Prior to ABS, I learned the technique of threshold braking—squeezing on the brakes just to the point before locking them up. Not a simple skill. Until the reader gets the ABS repaired, the car will operate safely under normal conditions.

■■■

Q: I have a 2009 Hyundai Santa Fe that recently has been making a grinding sound when the steering wheel is turned sharply to either side. Just turning the wheel to drive into my garage from the alley causes the sound of contact. My mechanic tells me he doesn't know what could be causing the issue. There is no sound when the car is being driven, only when I'm turning the wheel, especially sharply. Any ideas?

L.K., Chicago

A: There is a technical service bulletin (TSB) about this noise on much newer vehicles. The solution is to replace the steering column and housing. But I have a hunch the problem may be with the steering column coupling.

■■■

Q: I have a major disagreement with a friend who was a master mechanic and owned a shop for 40 years. He says you have to warm up your car for at least 5-10 minutes before driving. He says if you don't, fuel gets past your rings and into your oil. What I do, unless I need to clear windows

MOTORMOUTH

BY BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service



Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

or it's super cold, is idle for 30-60 seconds max and drive slowly for the first few minutes. I told him he's living in the past of carburetor days, and with modern engines, you are just wasting gas. Who is right?

M.S., Addison, Illinois

A: With modern engines, excessive idling just wastes gas. Driving gently until the engine reaches operating temperature is ideal. This gets the catalytic converters working to reduce emissions. Any gas that gets past the piston rings will vaporize and be cycled back into the engine via the PCV (positive crankcase ventilation) system.

Life & Style

‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3’ opens to \$114 million

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP FILM WRITER

There is nothing like the promise of a chapter closing to draw people to the movie theater, especially when tied to the Marvel Cinematic Universe. This weekend, “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3,” which says goodbye to this iteration of the space misfits and its driving creative voice, director James Gunn, earned \$114 million in ticket sales from 4,450 locations in North America, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Internationally, where the film opened in 52 territories

including China, “Vol. 3” earned \$168 million, giving it a \$282 million global debut.

Domestically, it’s both an impressive sum for any movie and slightly less than what we’ve come to expect from a Marvel opening. Last year on the same weekend, “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness,” riding on the success of “Spider-Man: No Way Home,” raked in \$187.4 million in its first three days in North America. And in November, “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” also opened over \$181.3 million.

But things have come back to earth this year, at least by



This image released by Marvel Studios shows, from left, Pom Klementieff as Mantis, Groot (voiced by Vin Diesel), Chris Pratt as Peter Quill/Star-Lord, Dave Bautista as Drax, Karen Gillan as Nebula in a scene from “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3.”

MARVEL-DISNEY VIA AP

it’s still a solid opening for the summer season, which he said is poised to deliver the most robust profits since 2019.

“Though ‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3’s’ debut may reflect a bit of audience fatigue for the reliable superhero genre, this is just the beginning for what promises to be an irresistible movie marketplace with a killer combination of appealing films for every taste and every audience demographic,” Dergarabedian said.

It’s Pulitzer Prize day, honoring journalism’s best work

NEW YORK (AP)—The Pulitzer Prizes will be awarded Monday to honor outstanding journalism during a violent year that included Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine, mass shootings that targeted an elementary school and supermarket, and communities beset with floods and flames fueled by climate change.

The winners will be announced during a livestream beginning at 3 p.m. EDT.

The Pulitzers honor the best stories in journalism from 2022 in 15 categories, as well as eight arts categories

focused on books, music and theater.

The public service prize winner receives a gold medal. All other winners receive \$15,000.

The prizes were established in the will of newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer and first awarded in 1917.

Fatimah Ashgar wins \$150,000 Carol Shields Prize for Fiction

NEW YORK (AP)—A debut novel by the poet and screenwriter Fatimah Ashgar has won the inaugural Carol Shields Prize for Fiction, a \$150,000 honor named for the late Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and given for outstanding work by a woman or non-binary person in the U.S. or Canada.

Ashgar’s “When We Were Sisters,” the story of three Muslim-American siblings, was praised Thursday by judges for weaving “narrative threads as exacting and spare as luminous poems, their fragility a mere guise for their complete, unflinching indestructibility.”

Ashgar is known for the poetry collection “If They Come for Us” and as the co-creator of the Emmy-nominated web series “Brown Girls.”

Shields, who died in 2003 at age 68, was an American-born author who spent much of her life in Canada. She won the Pulitzer in 1994 for her novel “The Stone Diaries.”

The Shields prize is overseen by the Carol Shields Prize Foundation, which provides grants and other forms of assistance to women and non-binary writers.

At rival studio DC/Warner Bros., “Shazam! Fury of the Gods” only made \$133.4 million total. The question on some analysts’ minds this weekend is whether it’s because of the specific character or a bigger issue of “superhero fatigue.”

“Guardians Vol. 3” bumped “The Super Mario Bros. Movie” out of first place after four weekends atop the charts and kicked off the summer movie season, a vital and usually profitable corridor for Hollywood that runs through Labor Day and often accounts for 40% of a year’s box office.

For Comscore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian,

‘Yellowstone’ to end in November, sequel starts in December

NEW YORK (AP)—The popular television western “Yellowstone” with Kevin Costner will end this fall and be replaced almost immediately by a sequel. But like any good drama, there’s some mystery involved.

The sequel, still untitled, will premiere December on the Paramount cable network, which also televises “Yellowstone,” Paramount said on Friday.

Behind Costner, who plays Montana rancher John Dutton, series creator Taylor Sheridan launched a phenomenon. The opening of its fifth season last November was seen by 12.1

million viewers on the night of its debut, more people than any other scripted series last fall—a remarkable feat for a show not on a broadcast network.

“We’ve been able to create a show that didn’t start out being popular but did it on its own terms,” Costner told The Associated Press last fall.

“Yellowstone” will wrap up with new episodes airing in November; how many was not announced on Friday. Those episodes haven’t been filmed yet, and it’s not clear whether Costner will participate following reports that he may want out of the series.

Paramount would not comment on that Friday, with a spokesperson saying only, “Kevin Costner is a big part of ‘Yellowstone’ and we hope that’s the case for a long time to come.”

David Glasser, CEO of 101 Studios, which produces “Yellowstone” with MTV Entertainment, said the new series “will be picking up where ‘Yellowstone’ leaves off in another epic tale.” While the series hasn’t been named, the word “Yellowstone” will be part of the title—an important distinction because that wasn’t the case for spinoffs like “1883” or “1923.”

Readers relate to widow’s desire to make some changes

DEAR ABBY: “Unsure How To Feel” (Jan. 24) was upset about changes her sister-in-law was making after the death of her husband. Within months, the widow had given away the husband’s belongings and begun making changes to their home. I saw myself in that column. I lost my beloved husband unexpectedly at the age of 47. Seeing his clothes and belongings in our closets every time I opened the doors was painful. They were a constant reminder of what I’d lost.

After selecting a few meaningful items, I also began giving his belongings to close family members and then to charities. When my daughter became upset, I realized that we all process our grief in different ways. She wanted to preserve everything the way it was. Neither reaction is wrong.

And as for the SIL’s remodeling, I did exactly what she did. For me, it was a way to regain control of my life. My husband’s death was shocking and heartbreaking. Having a project gave me something to focus on other than my grief.

I would ask your readers to PLEASE cut some slack with those who are going through the grieving process. It’s a horrible experience. Each person has to survive it in their own way. Just because it isn’t your way doesn’t make it wrong.

CATHERINE IN MICHIGAN

DEAR CATHERINE: Thank you for your wise words. They are so true. Most readers who responded to that letter agreed with you. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: To “Unsure,” I say: Your sister-in-law lived with your brother every day of their married lives in the same house she still lives in. You were likely not an everyday visitor. When my husband died, there were things in our house I NEEDED to change, just so I could get through every day.

Our bedroom was number one. It may seem heartless to anyone other than a spouse, but I could no longer sleep in the bed we had shared, in the room that was decorated in “his” style. I needed to make it solely my space; somewhere I could go to find peace.

Your sister-in-law is not disregarding your brother and his memory. She will always hold his memory in her heart, as you do. But living in that space likely requires her to make it less of a constant reminder of the love she has lost.

RUTH IN ILLINOIS

DEAR ABBY: I lost my husband seven months ago and began cleaning out his stuff almost immediately. Why would I want to look at his clothes every day? How does “Unsure” know her late brother’s marriage was so “good”? People thought that about mine, but it wasn’t.

Many of the changes to the house (painting, etc.) are things he and I had talked about, but he would never actually move on them. Changing artwork? Yes—not everything, but definitely some pieces I never really liked.

“Unsure” does indeed have to deal with her own grief, but she should leave her widowed sister-in-law alone. No one is “erasing” her brother, and his widow is not obligated to

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



remain stuck in the past.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR ABBY: My husband passed from cancer in December 2020. He had been in hospice and died in our home as he wished. There was no way I could stay there. Within the next eight months I had remodeled and sold our house and moved to the small town where my son and his family live. Moving was the best thing I could have done. I still grieve, but I don’t regret any of my actions. I know my husband would be proud of the decisions I made.

NO REGRETS IN TEXAS

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



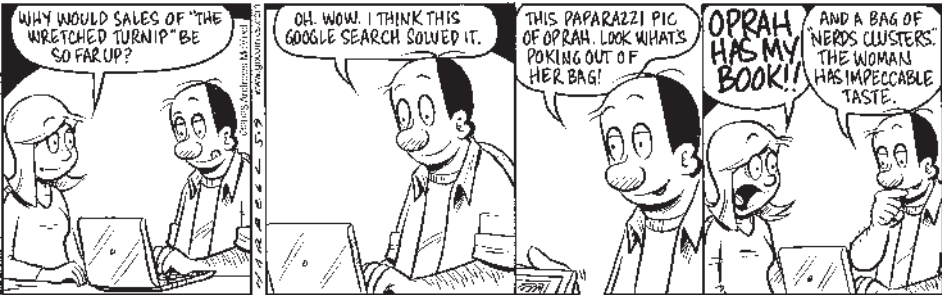
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 "Say what?" 37 Family 38 Confuse 41 Martini 42 CEO's ingredient degree, maybe 45 Tel — 46 Pardoned 48 News story intro 49 King, in Cannes 50 Raced 51 Privy to 52 Raggedy doll 53 Glimpse

DOWN 1 Forbidden act 2 Follow orders 3 Tiers 4 "I'm not im-pressed" 5 Dwelled 6 Furniture brand 7 Buddhist sect 8 Heavy cooking pot 9 Theater award 10 Hammer part 11 Formerly, once 16 "Sad to say ..." 20 — Paulo 21 "Fidelio" com-poser 22 ER workers 23 Ump 24 Entirely 25 TV schedule abbr. 26 Rover's warning 27 Energy 28 Adam's mate 29 Airline to Sweden 31 Sneaky laugh 34 Towboat 35 Chinese dynasty 37 Japa-nese beer 38 Indo-nesian island 39 Squared 40 Rover's pal 41 Hood-lum 42 Star athletes, briefly 43 Pager sound 44 Artist Warhol 46 Monk's title 47 British verb ending

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 5-9

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Steve Yzerman, 58; John Corbett, 62; Billy Joel, 74; Candice Bergen, 77.

Happy Birthday: Use your knowledge and charm to win favors and improve your position. Building a solid base will help you further your beliefs and encourage you to form alliances with people who share your concerns. Make a difference this year by responding to what's happening around you. Recognize who is on your side and who isn't, and use connections to further your interests. Your numbers are 5, 18, 22, 26, 30, 38, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Emotional problems will surface if you are too explicit regarding your plans. Take your time, strategize and leave nothing to chance. A passionate approach when dealing with a friend, colleague or relative will help you gain the support you need to forge ahead. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Do you believe in fate? Embrace whatever comes your way and search for an appropriate solution. What you discover will change your life and meaningful relationships. Speak from the heart, making what you have to offer crystal clear. ★★★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Get organized, and spend more time and money on learning and developing. Check out investments and look for ways to lower your overhead. Take on what you can handle and do your research. If you overload your plate, you'll fall short of your goal. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Share your thoughts and feelings with someone you love or want to partner with, and you'll progress. Your insight and ability to put others at ease will help when trying to drum up support

and help from those with something to contribute. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): A steady pace and paying attention to detail will help you finish what you start. Don't let anyone interfere with your schedule. A positive attitude will help you handle a sensitive issue tactfully. Do your best to sidestep someone looking for a fight. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Gather information and prepare to discuss what's important to you and who you plan to achieve your dreams alongside. Social events, conventions, travel and educational pursuits will help you connect with people instrumental in achieving your long-term goals. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Keep work and home life separate. Don't overspend or take on more than you can handle. Keeping the peace will be in your best interest. Look for a unique way to present what you have to offer, and you'll receive helpful feedback. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Put your energy where it counts, and you'll gain momentum and generate interest in your plans and progress. You will change how you feel about partnerships and who you want to spend more time working alongside if you invest more time in others. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be careful not to share sensitive information. Put your energy into how you earn your living and handle your money. Take better care of your health and emotional well-being. Do your best to achieve peace by distancing yourself from manipulative people and situations. ★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Put everything you've got into what you enjoy doing most, and you'll get great results. Focus on relationships, and protect yourself from being coerced into temptation and overindulgence. Make your position clear and do what's best for you. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A friend, relative or peer will oppose you. Be blunt about what you want and go your separate way. Look for any underlying problem that might interfere with your progress. Use your strengths to get ahead, and don't mix business with pleasure. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Added discipline will help you gain ground. Be direct about what you want to do, and implement the changes necessary to point you in the right direction. An event that requires physical strength and a good imagination will put you in the spotlight. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are dedicated, energetic and helpful. You are sincere and charitable.

☉: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☿: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ♀: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ♀♂: Aim high; start new projects. ♀♂♂: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	3		1	8				2	9		
4		1					3	7			
8	9	2		3						4	
7		9			3						
3		4	5	6			2	9	7		
				9	8	4			5		
	7		3		9			4	2		
					6					1	
1					2						

Difficulty: ★★ 5/9 ©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

3	8	5	1	4	6	2	9	7
1	2	9	5	3	7	6	4	8
6	4	7	8	9	2	5	1	3
5	3	8	7	1	4	9	6	2
9	7	2	3	6	5	4	8	1
4	6	1	2	8	9	7	3	5
2	9	3	6	5	8	1	7	4
7	1	6	4	2	3	8	5	9
8	5	4	9	7	1	3	2	6

Difficulty: ★ 5/8 ©2012 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

INTERESTING SHAPES Solution: 5 letters

D	I	S	C	S	L	A	R	D	E	H	Y	L	O	P
E	N	Y	P	E	L	T	T	O	B	N	I	E	L	K
C	T	U	R	Y	L	O	Z	E	N	G	E	H	K	Q
A	N	E	O	T	R	I	A	N	G	L	E	I	U	
G	I	T	E	R	E	A	N	A	S	C	V	T	A	
O	O	N	S	S	I	M	M	E	D	U	R	A	E	D
N	P	E	U	T	P	S	M	I	C	R	P	C	S	R
N	A	C	T	A	T	I	O	I	D	V	L	N	S	I
O	R	S	B	R	C	L	L	S	S	E	A	O	E	L
G	A	E	O	I	O	V	A	L	C	S	N	C	R	A
A	B	R	R	B	G	L	O	B	E	E	E	O	A	T
T	O	C	A	B	U	C	K	Y	B	A	L	L	C	E
N	L	R	N	O	R	D	E	H	A	R	T	E	T	R
E	A	N	N	U	L	U	S	E	R	A	U	Q	S	A
P	A	R	A	L	L	E	L	E	P	I	P	E	D	L

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Harden makes winning 3 in OT, 76ers tie series with Celtics



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—James Harden had a new friend he called his good-luck charm in the arena and the grit he needed to turn in a vintage effort — in the form of tying and winning shots — for the 76ers.

Looking down-and-out in the previous two games, Good Game James saved the 76ers in Game 4.

Harden hit the floater with 16 seconds left in regulation that tied the game, buried the go-ahead 3-pointer with 18 seconds remaining in overtime and scored 42 points to help the Sixers stave off a wild Boston Celtics comeback in a 116-115 victory on Sunday.

“I just want to win,” Harden said. “Today was do-or-die for us.”

The 76ers tied their playoff series at 2-2 with Game 5 set for Tuesday.

Harden won the game in front of John Hao, a paralyzed Michigan State shooting survivor who developed a long-distance friendship with the 10-time All-Star. Harden invited Hao to a game as soon as he was able to travel.

“He’s strong, he’s bouncing back, he’s recovering very well,” Harden said. “I feel like it’s my job to give him that light, that smile that he deserves. Hopefully today was one of those days where he can smile.”

Harden waved over Hao and signed his game-worn sneakers moments after Marcus Smart’s potential winner was a tick too late. The 76ers are now guaranteed to return home for Game 6 on Thursday.

Jaylen Brown said his poor defensive read when he ditched Harden to try and double Joel Embiid was a pivotal moment.

“It’s a gamble at the wrong time and a big shot by James Harden,” he said. “That’s my fault. I take full accountability.”

The Celtics did almost all they could to snuff out that chance. Smart and Jayson Tatum keyed a Celtics rally from 15 points down with 2 minutes

left in the third quarter.

Boston’s fun began in the fourth when Smart and Brown buried consecutive 3-pointers and Tatum attacked the rim for a bucket that wiped out an eight-point hole in 90 seconds. Al Horford put them ahead 98-90 — on a possession that started on the other end when Tyrese Maxey had his shot blocked — and shimmed for the crowd as boos rained on him.

Yes, the 76ers had home court but fans tensed up as memories all those second-round exits since 2001 stirred inside the building. Smart and Malcolm Brogdon hit consecutive 3s for a 105-100 lead.

But it was P.J. Tucker, the heart and guts of the Sixers, who again did the dirty work on a defensive rebound and a bucket. He made the free throw with 1:05 left and the tie game gave the Sixers new life.

Smart hit two free throws and Harden tied it 107-all to guarantee a thriller.

The Sixers were on the brink of defeat numerous times over the final 17 minutes, none more than when Embiid crashed into Smart on a driving, one-handed bank shot with 1:49 left in overtime and was whistled for an offensive foul. The play was reviewed and the call stood. Boston kept its 112-111 lead.

Embiid, the NBA MVP who had 34 points and 13 rebounds, kept his composure and eventually got to the line to sink two free throws with 59 seconds left and the season in the balance.

Tatum — who struggled to score early but finished with 24 points, 18 rebounds, six assists and four blocks — hit a step-back 3 for a 115-113 lead. Harden made sure Boston would never challenge again.

“Jayson Tatum’s 3 was awful (a push-off) wasn’t called,” 76ers coach Doc Rivers said. “You’ve got to call that play. I know it’s a big play and I’m a big fan of refs not deciding (the game) but it could have decided the game.”

Brown scored 23 points and Smart had 21.

Brown, though, took only three shots in the fourth quarter



Philadelphia 76ers' James Harden gives his sneakers to John Hao after Game 4 in an NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinals playoff series, Sunday, May 7, 2023, in Philadelphia. AP

and none in OT when the Celtics needed him.

“I guess I’ve got to demand the ball a little bit more,” he said. “I thought good things happened when I had it in my hands. I thought our offense was OK. We chipped away, we made big-time shots, we got great looks all game long. We just came up short in the end.”

Harden did this already when he played in Game 1 like he was still the MVP in Houston and dropped 45 points to spur the upset road victory. Then, his game disappeared and he played two of the worst games of his career.

Harden’s 5-for-28 combined shooting in Games 2 and 3 was worst effort for him over any two-game span in his career — regular season or playoffs.

The best the 76ers could do ahead of Game 4 was only hope for a productive Harden.

Philly got him.

Harden hit all three 3s in the first half and scored 21 points, five more than his Game 3 total. Embiid was as potent as he could be on one good

knee and had 19 points and 11 boards to give the 76ers a 59-50 lead at the break.

“Tonight, playing a lot of minutes kind of got to me at the end,” Embiid said. “We made the plays when we needed. PJ with the big and-1. Obviously, the James shot. I thought we stuck with it. But that’s been us all season long. We stick together and fight through everything.”

SUNS 129, NUGGETS 124

PHOENIX (AP)—The Denver Nuggets—understandably—were putting a huge share of their defensive pressure and attention on Phoenix’s high-scoring duo of Devin Booker and Kevin Durant in the fourth quarter of Game 4 on Sunday night.

“We were trying to make other guys beat us not named Booker, not named Durant,” Nuggets coach Michael Malone explained.

Landry Shamet obliged.

Shamet made four crucial 3-pointers in the final period, Booker and Durant both scored

36 points, and the Suns beat the Nuggets 129-124 to even their Western Conference semifinal playoff series at two games apiece.

Booker also finished with a playoff career-high 12 assists, including a few to Shamet, who finished with 19 points on 5-of-8 shooting from 3-point range. Shamet had scored 14 points the entire postseason before Sunday.

“Just making quick decisions, just trying to make the defense pay,” Booker said.

The series returns to Denver for Game 5 on Tuesday.

Denver lost despite a huge game from MVP runner-up Nikola Jokic, who poured in 53 points on 20-of-30 shooting.

Jokic used his physical play to knock down several big buckets, even ripping the ball away from Suns owner Mat Ishbia at one point after the ball went out of bounds, which earned the Nuggets All-Star a technical foul.

“I was making shots, attacking the paint,” Jokic said. “It was just one of those nights.”

The Suns took a 98-92 lead into the fourth quarter after a scoring flurry from Booker, who had 17 points in the third. Phoenix wouldn’t trail in the fourth, though Denver didn’t go quietly.

The Nuggets trailed 116-106 with 4:55 remaining but never panicked, slowly cutting into the lead. They pulled within 123-120 with 22.4 seconds left but TJ Warren made two free throws to push the margin back to five.

Booker — averaging 37 points on 60% shooting in these playoffs — was hot once again, shooting 14 of 18 from the field, including

3 of 4 on 3-pointers.

“I’m just trying to win,” Booker said. “Throw that efficiency (expletive) out the window, I don’t care about that. Just keep going. Keep attacking, keep being aggressive. If it’s a product of getting open shots and knocking them down, that’s what I’m supposed to do.”

Jamal Murray added 28 points and seven assists for the Nuggets.

Suns point guard Chris Paul missed his second straight game with a strained left groin suffered during Game 2.

The Suns took a 63-61 lead by halftime. Jokic had 24 points for the Nuggets before the break while Durant had 21 for the Suns.

Jokic was assessed a technical foul in the second after a bizarre altercation with Ishbia.

Late in the period, Suns guard Josh Okogie crashed into the seats while trying to save a loose ball. He landed in a group of fans on the baseline that included Ishbia, who grabbed the basketball.

Jokic was trying to get the basketball quickly — apparently so the Nuggets could start their offensive possession — when he tried to take the ball away from Ishbia. The ball flew backward into the crowd, and then Ishbia was knocked backward by Jokic’s elbow.

“The ball went over into the corner there and one of the fans was holding the ball,” referee Tony Brothers said to a pool reporter. “Jokic came to get the ball, grabbed it away from the fan, then after that he deliberately gave him a shove and pushed him down, so he was issued an unsportsmanlike technical foul.”

LeBron James’ son Bronny commits to play basketball at USC

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James’ oldest son, Bronny, says he will play basketball at the University of Southern California in the fall.

Bronny James abruptly announced his much-anticipated decision on social media Saturday, about two hours before his father’s Los Angeles Lakers hosted the Golden State Warriors in Game 3 of their second-round playoff series.

The 18-year-old James was a McDonald’s All-American just like his father, but the 6-foot-3

guard was among the few uncommitted elite high school basketball prospects heading toward the summer. The namesake son of the top scorer in NBA history played at Sierra Canyon School, which is known for educating scions of the sports and entertainment industries in Chatsworth, an outer suburban neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Bronny James announced his decision by writing the Trojans’ school slogan, “Fight On,” below a photo of him-

self wearing his high school uniform in the Trojans’ locker room at the Galen Center.

James and his Sierra Canyon team played at the arena last January, beating a team from Georgia’s Wheeler High School led by elite recruit Isaiah Collier — who is now James’ teammate at USC.

“Congratulations to my son on his next journey, on picking a great university,” James said after the Lakers routed Golden State 127-97 in Game 3. “I’m proud of him.”

Although he isn’t completely sure about all of his great-grandparents, the elder James believes Bronny is the first person from his family to go to college.

“This is an incredible thing,” LeBron added. “Obviously, his dad didn’t go to school. His mom didn’t go to college. It’s super-cool. ... USC is getting a great kid. He’s there to play basketball, (but) they’re going to be super surprised at how great a kid he is, even though they’ve been recruiting him for a while.”

Goldschmidt's 3 homers help Cardinals stop 8-game skid

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Paul

Goldschmidt homered three times, Brendan Donovan hit a three-run drive and the St. Louis Cardinals stopped an eight-game losing streak with a 12-6 win over the Detroit Tigers on Sunday.

Goldschmidt, had four hits and four RBIs in his third three-homer game, the first since March 29, 2019, against Milwaukee. He hit solo homers in the first and third innings off Alex Faedo and a two-run drive in the eighth against Tyler Holton.

Lars Nootbaar added a two-run single to cap off a seven-run sixth inning for the Cardinals, who had been on their longest skid in 16 years.

Jake Rogers hit a grand slam for the Tigers, whose five-game winning streak was stopped. Spencer Torkelson also homered for Detroit.

St. Louis sent 12 batters to the plate in the sixth to take control 10-6. The Tigers committed three errors in the frame.

All three of Goldschmidt's home runs came with two strikes.

"I'm always trying to hit it hard, but there's a little adjustment with two strikes," Goldschmidt said. "You can't just be up there free swinging. Sometimes, it works out like today and other times they strike you out three times."

St. Louis manager Oliver Marmol says Goldschmidt displays plate discipline no matter the count.

"The guy has a really good game plan and he sticks with it," Marmol said. "Pretty remarkable, very productive."

St. Louis has won only two of 12 series' this season and is 11-24. The Cardinals got their first home win since April 19.

"Obviously, we're not happy with how this season has started," Donovan said. "We could have rolled over today. This team does not quit. We're not where we want to be as far as wins and losses or how we've played to this point. Today shows you that we still have fight."

Drew VerHagen (2-0) pitched two perfect innings.

"We're going to need a lot of wins to be able to come back from this hole that we've got ourselves into," Goldschmidt said. "You can't get too far ahead of yourself. Take it game-by-game, pitch-by-pitch and see what happens."

Donovan homered off Mason Englert (1-2) for an 8-6 lead in a seven-run sixth. Dylan Carlson and Andrew Knizner followed with hits around an error, and Nootbaar added a double.

Detroit took a 6-3 lead with five runs in the sixth, all after shortstop Tommy Ed-



St. Louis Cardinals' Paul Goldschmidt runs the bases after hitting a solo home run against the San Francisco Giants during the first inning of a baseball game in San Francisco, Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

man's two-out error.

Miguel Cabrera followed with a run-scoring single. Pinch-hitter Zach McKinstry drew a walk before Rogers homered off JoJo Romero.

Torkelson hit his third homer of the season in the fourth inning.

"It's frustrating because we worked hard to get back in the game," Hinch said.

Faedo allowed three runs and three hits in 4 2/3 innings. He retired his last seven hitters in his first appearance of the season.

St. Louis starter Steve Matz have up one run and five hits over 5 1/3 innings. The 31-year-old left-hander has not won as a starter since last July 23.

"I thought it went well, a lot of soft contact," Matz said. "Ultimately, the results were good."

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

REYES 8, YANKEES 7, 10 INNINGS
NEW YORK (AP)—Gerrit Cole failed to hold a six-run lead, allowing his first two home runs of the season, and Isaac Paredes' 10th-inning single off Albert Abreu (1-1) gave Tampa Bay two wins in the three-game series.

Anthony Rizzo and Harrison Bader homered for the Yankees (18-17), who led 6-0 before Tampa Bay scored twice in the fifth and five times in the sixth to take an 7-6 lead.

Jose Siri and Christian Bethancourt homered as the major league-best Rays (28-7) improved to 19-3 home. Last-place New York has lost 10 of its last 16 games and trails the Rays by 10 games.

Jalen Beeks (1-2) won before 32,142, the largest crowd at Tropicana Field since 2016.

Cole's ERA rose to 2.09 from

1.35, which had been tied for the major league lead.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

BRAVES 3, ORIOLES 2, 12 INNINGS
ATLANTA (AP)—Michael Harris II hit a game-ending double off Cionel Pérez (1-1) as Atlanta won two of three from Baltimore, which lost consecutive games for the first time since April 8-9.

Braves right fielder Ronald Acuña Jr. brought a roar from the sellout crowd of 40,800 at Truist Park in the 11th when he caught Adam Frazier's 322-foot flyout and made a one-hop throw to third baseman Austin Riley, who tagged Austin Hays for a double play.

Michael Tonkin (3-1) pitched two perfect innings.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

DODGERS 5, PADRES 2, 10 INNINGS
SAN DIEGO (AP)—Mookie Betts hit a game-tying homer with two outs in the ninth inning and James Outman hit a two-run shot in the 10th to lead Los Angeles over San Diego.

Dodgers reliever Caleb Ferguson (2-0) earned the win and Evan Phillips earned his fifth save with a scoreless 10th inning. Brent Honeywell (2-1), who pitched the 10th inning for San Diego, took the loss.

Manny Machado had three hits and an RBI for the Padres. Fernando Tatis Jr. had a double and made a spectacular sliding catch in the second inning to rob Max Muncy of a hit.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

PHILLIES 6, RED SOX 1
PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Kyle Schwarber homered after being dropped from leadoff to fifth in the batting order, and Philadelphia stopped a six-

game skid and ended Boston's eight-game winning streak.

J.T. Realmuto singled twice and drove in two runs for the defending NL champions who won for the first time since Bryce Harper's return to the lineup on Tuesday.

Taijuan Walker (3-2) allowed one run and three hits in six innings with six strikeouts.

Nick Castellanos hit a go-ahead grounder off Tanner Houck (3-2).

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

GUARDIANS 2, TWINS 0
CLEVELAND (AP)—Cleveland's Cal Quantrill had a no-hit bid broken up by Alex Kirilloff's two-out single in seventh.

Quantrill (2-2) allowed one hit in seven innings, and James Karinchak and Emmanuel Clase finished with hitless relief. Clase got his 12th save.

José Ramírez and Josh Bell had RBI singles in the first off Joe Ryan (5-1).

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

ROYALS 5, ATHLETICS 1
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Salvador Perez went 3 for 4 with a 462-foot homer over the left-field fountains and Kansas City avoided being swept in the series between teams with the worst records in the major leagues. The Royals (9-26) lost two of three to the A's (8-27).

Ryan Yarbrough (1-4) pitched 5 2/3 innings and allowed one run and three hits. He left getting hit on the face by a liner that was 106.2 mph off the bat of Ryan Noda.

Mason Miller (0-2) gave up two runs and five hits in six innings.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

BLUE JAYS 10, PIRATES 1
PITTSBURGH (AP)—Whit Merrifield had four RBIs, three

innings since a 13-run fourth inning on April 13, 2023.

Michael Kopech (1-3) gave up eight hits in six innings, allowing his runs on solo homers by Jonathan India, Jose Barrero, Tyler Stephenson and Wil Myers.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

MARINERS 3, ASTROS 1
SEATTLE (AP)—Bryce Miller (1-0) gave up two hits over six shutout innings for his first major league win, Justin Topa worked around a leadoff single in the ninth for his first big league save and Seattle took two of three from the World Series champions.

First baseman José Abreu made a run-scoring error in a two-run third inning and Matt Gage committed a bases-loaded balk when he relieved Brandon Bielak (0-1) in the fifth. The Astros have lost three straight series and are 17-17.

Julio Rodríguez, in a 1-for-18 slide, hit a career-long, 454-foot homer for the Mariners, who have won six of seven.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

BREWERS 7, GIANTS 3
SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Willy Adames and William Contreras hit two-run homers, and Milwaukee ended a six-game losing streak while stopping San Francisco's four-game winning streak.

Joel Payamps (1-0) struck out three in 1 2/3 innings. Ross Stripling (0-2) allowed five runs and seven hits in five innings.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

RANGERS 16, ANGELS 8
ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Leody Taveras had a career-high four hits along with four RBIs and Adolis García hit his team-leading ninth homer as Texas overcame a 3-0 deficit and won its second straight after losing the series opener. García leads the major leagues with 36 RBIs.

Ezequiel Duran and Josh H. Smith also went deep. Taveras drove in four runs for the Rangers, who scored 26 runs in the last two games after losing Friday's series opener 5-4 in 10 innings.

Josh Sborz (1-1) pitched two scoreless innings. José Suarez (1-2) gave up seven runs, six hits and three walks in 2 2/3 innings.

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

NATIONALS 9, DIAMONDBACKS 8
PHOENIX (AP)—Joey Meneses hit a three-run homer in the ninth inning off Miguel Castro (1-1) and had four RBIs after Washington rallied from a four-run deficit to take an 8-6 lead.

Erasmus Ramírez (2-1) didn't allow a baserunner in 1 1/3 innings and Hunter Harvey worked around a walk in ninth for his first save since 2019 at Double-A Bowie to prevent Arizona's first sweep of the Nationals since 2009.

DMS, HMS dominate boys hoops

By LEIGH GASES

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

ITE DanDan Middle School and Hopwood Middle School dominated their opponents in the IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2022-2023.

The Tottots won a lopsided 58-19 contest against the Tanapag Middle School Tatagas, while the Hilitais trounced the Grace Christian Academy Eagles, 34-9 last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

DMS has maintained their unbeaten record this season, defeating all opponents in their path for eight wins in as many games.

The Tottots were in control throughout the game—pounding on the Tatagas defensively and stacking up points from every angle.

By the end of the first half, DMS' Matua Fejeran scored 6 points of his own, while the passing game and teamwork was a major factor in score contribution. Nine other Tottots made it to the scoreboard and by the half game buzzer, they had put up 24 points.

Meanwhile, the Tatagas had a hard time breaking through the Tottots' defense and struggled to put up 11 points in the first half.

The second half was a scoring frenzy for the Tottots with Fejeran, Edward Manibusan, and



LEIGH GASES

Hopwood Middle School's John Lawrence Campangpangan goes up for a shot during their game against Grace Christian Academy last Wednesday in the IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2022-2023 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Louis Rectitud taking charge and taking turns at the basket.

Everyone got a piece of the action as they made at least 2 points each. Fejeran and Manibusan were the leading scorers with 10 each, while Rectitud had 8 markers.

TMS' Collin Maratita scored the most with 9 markers. Teammates Jeremiah Yokota shot 6, and Anthon Tudela contributed 5.

In the Hilitais-Eagles game, the Hilitais stuck it to the Eagles and came out on top.

The Eagles could not catch a break as they have not won

a game this season, but they still played with heart and tried their best.

The Hilitais just had an overpowering defense so the Eagles could not follow through with their attempts at the basket.

Speedy plays by the Hilitais within the paint allowed them to pull away further into the lead by the second half.

Leon Galarse led the Hilitais with his 14 markers, while Chris Esdrelon had 6 of his own.

The Eagles' Blaze Sablan scored 4 points, Austin Yumul sank a 3-pointer, and Manuel

Magboo scored 2, while Hans Ordas threw in a free throw.

In other results that day, ChaCha Ocean View Middle School edged Saipan Community School, 31-26; and Saipan International School defeated Agape Christian School, 44-34.

In the junior varsity games, FMS defeated DMS 20-14, and HMS slayed Mount Carmel School, 32-14.

As of Wednesday in the standings, DMS leads with their eight wins; second is SIS

with 8-1; third is FMS with 6-2; ACS has 1-3; MCS is at an even 4-4; COVMS and SCS are at 3-5; HMS has a 3-6 record; TMS is 1-7; and GCA is down with nine losses.

Today is the last slate of regular season games with FMS taking on DMS and COVMS versus SCS.

The double-elimination tourney is set to start on Thursday, May 11, at 4:45pm, then on Friday also at the same time. On Saturday, May 13, is the continuation of the tourney at 8:30am with the championship round at 12pm.

DMS 58 — Fejeran 10, Manibusan 10, Tomei, Rectitud 4, Danis 4, Palacios 3, Tibayan 2, Hornejas 2, Cruz, 2, Agulto 2.

TMS 19 — Maratita 9, Yokota 6, Tudela 5.

Scoring by halves: 24-11, 58-19.

HMS 34 — Garcia 2, Esdrelon 6, Galarse 14, Tabhan 4, Champangpangan 4, Enriquez 2.

GCA 9 — Sablan 4, Yumul 3, Magboo 2, Ordas 1.

Scoring by halves: 13-3, 34-9.

Marianas Skate Series on May 27

By LEIGH GASES

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REPORTER

The Marianas Surf Skate League presents the first ever skateboarding competition in the CNMI—the Marianas Skate Series—on Saturday, May 27, at the skatepark between the Gold's Gym and the Garapan Central Park.

The first event of the day is the Youth Clinic for 12 years old and below. Local skateboarders Mikko from the High Tide Band and T.J. Deleon Guerrero will teach skateboarding basics and end with a small race.

The second event is a beginner competition called a Jam Session where beginners will face off freestyle format for a set amount of time. One winner will be selected.

The final event is for the expert level skateboarders who will be competing in an Olympic street skate format called 2/5/3.

Competitors will have two 45-second runs and five tricks to perform. They will be judged on creativity, degree of difficulty, and execution.

There will be prizes for first, second, and third—including brand new skateboard decks.

The Marianas Surf Skate League is a non-profit organization formed to promote the sports of surfing and skateboarding in the CNMI through events, competitions, and youth clinics.

Edward Manibusan, the organizer of the event said, "We want to see our athletes compete internationally. We also believe in protecting our environment, marine safety, and living healthy lifestyles through our sports. We want

to help attract more people to the CNMI."

MSSL first hosted the Boogie Down at Obyan bodyboarding competition in December 2022 and wants to make these competitions annual events.

MSSL thanks their sponsors MARPAC, Pokka, Boardline, All Star Sporting Goods, DLNR Parks and Recreations, Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan Mayor's Office, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Saipan Surf Company, Salty Skin Pacific, Local Bones, and Caravan Restaurant.

According to Manibusan, MSSL intends to adopt the Saipan Skate Park and raise funds to replace the broken solar lights, repair and resurface the concrete skate surface, and replace the rusting railings. "We are looking for donations and volunteers for our events and programs," he said.

The official registration is on their Instagram account @marianas.surfskate.league.

TOTTOTS

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again in the 14U boys 200m with a time of 26.01; Tanapag Middle School's Abraham Falig was second at 26.06; and Iakopo was third at 26.25 seconds.

The Lady Tottots took first in the 14U girls 800m as Addalee Taflinger flew in first at 2:49.48; Aubrey White from SIS was second at 2:56.99; and third was ACS' Barbara Wang at 2:58.99. Taflinger won first again in the 14U girls 1,500m with a time of 6:02.69; Second was Wang at 6:22.48; and third was DMS' Jian Chun at 6:45.21. Taflinger made it three in a row as she won first again in the 14U girls 3,000m with a time of 14:02.00; Wang was second at 14:16.36;

and SIS' Faith Arriola was third at 14:20.45.

In the 14U boys javelin throw field event, DMS' Zion Rogopes was first with a throw of 28.15m; Caleb Sablan from FMS was second at 26.68m and teammate Peyton Basa was third at 26.39m.

In the 14U boys shot put throw, DMS' Kallan Seidler was first at 9.42m; Kymani Nabors from TJHS was second at 9.22m; and David Ye from Saipan Community School was third with 9m.

Rogopes was first again in the 14U boys discus throw event with 25.56m; Basa was second at 25.39m; and DMS' Jacob Calvo was third with 24.96m.

The Lady Tottots claimed the top spot in a close 14U girls 4X100m relay with a time of 1:00.52; second was TJHS with

1:00.92; and ChaCha Ocean View Middle School bagged third place with 1:04.46.

The Tottots won second place in the 14U boys 4X100m relay with a time of 53.96; first was ACS with 52.65; third was Hopwood Middle School at 58.26 seconds.

In the 14U boys 4X400m relay, SIS won first with a time of 4:18.84; ACS was second at 4:20.94; and third was DMS with a time of 4:22.90.

Top 3 in the 14U girls 200m was Ysabella Lenteja from TJHS at 28.59; Aubrey White at 30.33; and DMS' Alyssa Mendiola at 31.12 seconds.

In the 14U boys 400m, SIS' Moshe Sikkell claimed first at 58.88; Christopher Cruz was second at 59.95; and Grace Christian Academy's Michael Miller was third at 1:00.71.

In fact, on the way home Villafria and his support team saw runners still trying to finish at 2pm with the country's midday sun in full glory.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. again marveled at Villafria's commitment to soldier on in his running hobby.

"Ronald is one of our most experienced distance runners. It is amazing we have someone from here committing to ultra

distance. Congratulations to our brother Ron completing another ultra," he said.

Villafria's next challenge is a 10K run in Manila on May 14, before a 70-km ultramarathon on May 20.

He is currently taking up EIM Electrical Installation Maintenance courses under the Technical Education And Skills Development Authority in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

Top 3 in the 14U girls 400m was Lenteja with 1:07.89; Ella Hall from GCA at 1:08.57; and Taflinger with 1:09.18.

In the 14U boys long jump event, FMS' Changhwan Ryu threw the farthest with 4.79m; Seidler won second with 4.7m; and Caleb Sablan won third at 4.58m.

DMS coach and teacher Simon Necesito was almost speechless throughout the interview. "Words cannot express how excited we are... I asked them to give 100% and they gave 110% today. They did amazing throughout the qualifiers and the finals.

Co-coach and teacher Jeri

May Tudela said that she is proud of them all and was equally as excited as Necesito. "We have a lot of good talent here... All the intense training led to insane results. DMS girls, a lot of hard work went into this, and you believed in yourselves. You guys did great."

last Friday.

First Game

The Game 89 — King 22, Richardson 15, Bravo 14, Mendiola 13, Sablan 13, Guerrero 10, Ong 2.

Susan's Catering 84 — Torres 24, Bernardo 15, Padayao 14, Duenas 11, Capalad 8, Genese 6, Galarse 3, Castillo 3.

Scoring by quarters: 23-20, 41-40, 61-62, 89-84.

Second Game

Martech-OI'Aces 98 — Schmidt 38, Basa 14, Kabiriel 11, Lizama 10, Brungard 8, Pelisamen 7, Atan 4, Barcinas 3, Onopwy 2.

JTM Saipan 80 — Jone. Broncano 17, Bayna 16, Bernardo 14, Tengco 11, Cruz 6, Ruiz 4, Jona. Broncano 3, Ferrer 3, K. Rodriguez 2, Demonterverde 2, Dancel 2.

Scoring by quarters: 31-16, 56-36, 75-53, 98-80.

VILLAFRIA

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As always, he was able to endure the long stretches of silence running alone and tiring by motivating himself to run fast and not stop as the thought of running under the Philippines' scorching hot sun beating on you would surely be an additional hardship.



Harden makes winning 3 in OT, 76ers tie series with Celtics.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

DMS, HMS dominate boys hoops.

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20 TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tottots sweep MS athletics champs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

DanDan Middle School Tottots flew to victory as they swept both the boys and girls division of the 14U PSS/McDonald's All Schools Athletics 2022-2023 championships last Friday night and Saturday morning at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.



The Tottots boys collected a total 112 points; SIS and Agape Christian School were

bagged first overall in the girls division with 100 points; Tinian Jr. High School was second with 69 points; and Saipan International School was third with 59 points.

DMS tied at second with 68 points; and third was Francisco M. Sablan Middle School with 61 points. They started their round up of first place wins when Christopher Cruz came in first in the 14U boys 100m at 12.04; Audiescott Iakopo from SIS was second at 12.44; and third was ACS' Shulun He at 12.63 seconds.

Cruz bagged first place
See TOTTOTS on Page 19



LEIGH GASES
DanDan Middle School's Alyssa Mendiola, left, leads the relay race in the girls 14U PSS/McDonald's All Schools Athletics 2022-2023 championships last Saturday morning at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

LEIGH GASES
The DanDan Middle School athletics team poses with their coaches Simon Necesito, right, and Jeri May Tudela, left, after their sweep of the middle school 14U PSS/McDonald's All Schools Athletics 2022-2023 championships last Friday night and Saturday morning at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.



The Game overcomes Susan's Catering; Ol'Aces still perfect

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



The Game outplayed Susan's Catering at crunchtime, while Martech-Ol'Aces continued its march toward perfection in the open division of the 2nd Annual Saipan Centennial Lions Basketball League last Saturday at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

The Game needed crucial offensive rebounds and put-backs from former CNMI and Guam national player Dennis Mendiola in the clutch to withstand Susan's Catering, 89-84.

The match was a dogfight from the get-go with The Game leading only by 3 points, 23-20, after a quarter of play.

It was only a candlestick lead at the half with The
See GAME on Page 19



MARK RABAGO

The Game starting center Dennis Mendiola faces a Susan's Catering double team in the open division of the 2nd Annual Saipan Centennial Lions Basketball League last Saturday at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

Villafria finishes 7th in 65K ultra marathon

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Run Saipan's Ronald Villafria finished seventh in the Cabanatuan City to Dingalan, Aurora 65K Ultra Marathon held last April 29 and 30 in the Philippines.

The 52-year-old long-time Saipan resident negotiated the 40.3-mile course from the former Nueva Ecija capital to the so-called Batanes of the East in 9 hours and five minutes.

Villafria said the hardest part of the ultra marathon was running along the national highway in pitch darkness as he started at 11:25pm on April 29 and he finished 8:30am the following day. He said he also

found challenging the steep hills of the course.

Asked what was the best part of the race aside from finishing among the Top 10, Villafria said it would probably be the Philippine's breathtaking countryside scenery.

He then thanked the support given him by the Nueva Ecija Runners, namely Miguel and Sheryl Ann Zapatero, Chard Magbual, and Ranzell Navarro.

Villafria said along the nine-hour ultra marathon he was fortunate not to have needed a bathroom break and he snacked on bread and hydrated himself with water and energy drinks.

See VILLAFRIA on Page 19



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ronald Villafria shows off his seventh place trophy and finisher's medal in the Cabanatuan City to Dingalan, Aurora 65K Ultra Marathon held last April 29 and 30 in the